Railway Reading.

JACK & THE TANNER OF WYMONDHAM

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "MARY POWELL"

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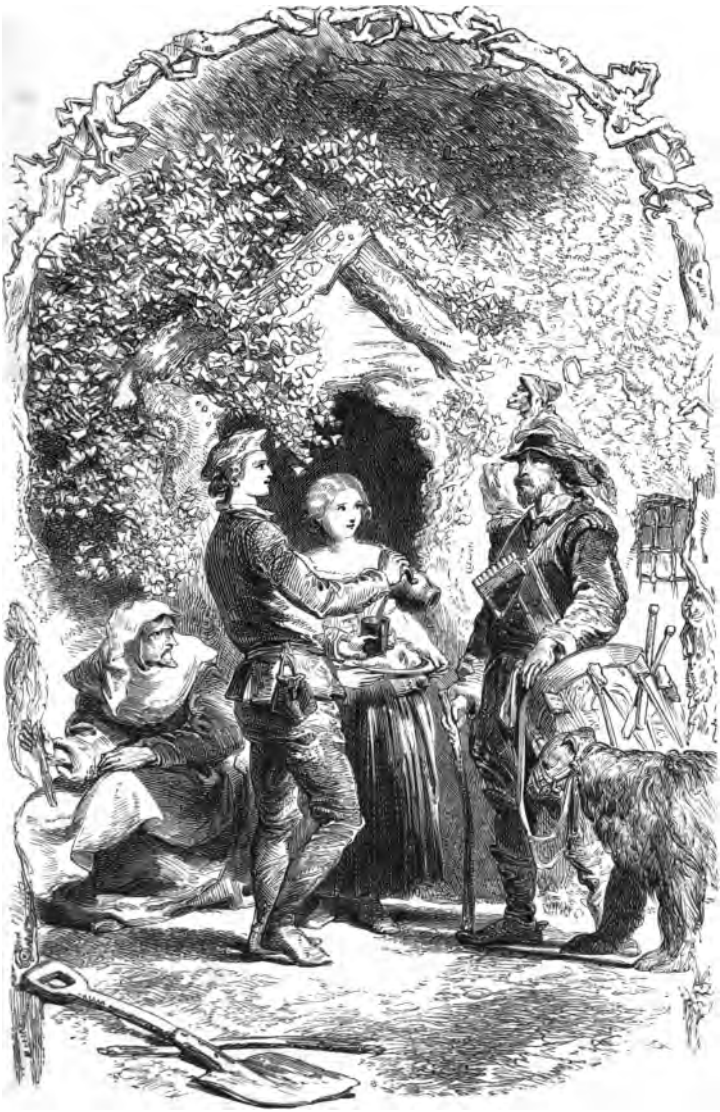

THE BEAR-WARDEN.

JACK AND THE TANNER OF WYMONDHAM;

A Tale of the Time of Edward the Sixth.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "MARY POWELL."

WITH FRONTISPIECE.

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JACK AND THE TANNER OF WYMONDHAM.

CHAPTER I.

JACK AND GILL QUARREL ABOUT *NIL*.

THROW some more billets on the fire, Madge, and set down some crab-apples to roast—we'll have lamb's-wool to-night! How the wind rages among the old oaks! Snap;—there goes another branch; a big one, I'll warrant.

You see, boys, thus it befel—I've ne'er cared to tell you the rights on't before, seeing 'tis a matter not o'er pleasant to me to remember, for I didn't altogether behave as I should ha' done,—was hot and heady, like a young unbroken colt, and brooked the first sting of trouble as ill as the colt would brook the sting of a horse-fly. Howbeit, confidence breeds confidence. You mostly tell me of your own little griefs and struggles, and you shall hear what some of mine were at your age.

Good now! what junketings there used to be down at the Moat-house! Farmer Hathaway had a wholesome spirit in him, if ever man had. Work hard, play merrily —that was his maxim. At Christmas-tide there were all manner of Yule games in his wide kitchen—throwing nuts, kissing under the misletoe, blind-man's buff—till our breath was gone; and then we sate about the hearth, as we're doing now, and fancied fiery caves and burning castles, or told merry tales and fearsome ones,—had catches, purposes, quip-and-query; and gossip's bowl, to crown all. You never found in that house lack of nutmeg, ginger, or sugar; and as for cakes and cold dumplings, it was ask and have. Up with the lark, to bed with the lamb. No physics, save such as grew in the fields and woods; only that a phial of adder's fat always hung by the wall, for the woodmen when they were adder-bit, to heal their wounds withal; and a spider-sting they cured with spider's web, and a sting of wasp or bee with honey. That was their pharmacy. A horse-shoe over the door, to keep off witches; an ashen bough at each bed-head, to ward off evil spirits of the night, and things that walk by darkness. Treen platters, beechen bowls, and horn spoons and cups on the shelf, green rushes on the floor. One Candlemas eve, a candle-snuff fell among the rushes, and set 'em all ablaze. Gillian's green petticoat was singed; she shrieked, and I caught her out of

harm's way, ere I helped the rest to put down the fire by smouldering it under lots of damp rushes, and treading them down, at the price of scorched soles to one's brogues and a most intolerable smell of burnt leather; add to which, a mort of smoke and smut, and a filthy odour of burnt bones, scraps of fat, turnip-peels, old rags, and what not, among the rushes; so that we were fain to set the house-door ajar, though the sleet drove in to the chimney-corner.

Master Francis was among us that night. Dame Hathaway had been his foster-nurse; and he was fond of coming down from the Hall, and, laying aside the gentleman, to make merry with us. Howbeit, when he made as though to forget his dignity, 'twas on the understood condition that we should always remember it. Thus, he would give Diccon a good-humoured rap over the pate with the utmost affability; but, an' Diccon had gi'en him as good as he took, his blood would have been up in an instant.

I did not relish this—I thought they that came among the turkeys should take turkeys' fare. Howbeit, my opinion was not asked, for I was only upon sufferance myself, and Dame Hathaway delighted to cocker him up a good deal. Also I thought he looked sweet upon Gillian, and I did not believe he would ever demean himself to marry the likes of her; therefore, to what

good? Moreover, an' I had thought he *would* fancy to marry her an' spoil my chance, I should have liked him still less. So one way or another, I was not over cordial to the young squire, albeit he was mostly very civil to me. Why could he not keep his own place? Were there no squires' daughters as pretty as Gillian? Well, to *my* mind, and peradventure to his, there were not; but still, why should he leave his own flocks to seek after my one ewe-lamb? Oh! my heart could not bear it; I gnawed my nails down to the quick, thinking o't, many a day.

One morning I had been gathering my cap full of mushrooms off the abbey-land (my father, you wot, had been the abbot's reeve before the breaking up of the greater monasteries, whereon all the prime o' the abbey-land went to Master Francis's father); and knowing that, as far as stewed mushrooms were concerned, Father Hathaway was a downright goliardise,—a very glutton, I thought to make him a compliment of them, and yet be home to my work afore the sun was an hour up. On I went, brushing through the dew, springing now a pheasant, now a hare; when o' sudden, I became 'ware of a horse's tread over the wet grass; and through the brake rides up Master Francis, *point-de-vice* and smart as a bridegroom. "Rest you merry, Jack," says he; "what have you got there—a bird's nest?"—"Mushrooms, Francis," says I, half-covering them with my hand,

so as he could but just get a squint of them.—"Mushrooms!" quod he; "they're good, with truffles, in a game-pie: what dost ask for them?"—"Nothing," quod I, "I don't want to sell them."—"Nay, if it comes to that," says he, "what if I want to have them? I fancy they're all off the abbey-land."—"Sooth to say, they are, sir," quod I, "but I wist not the game and forest-laws stooped so low as to mushrooms. Howbeit, rather than have words, I'll carry them up to the Hall for your breakfast." —"Never mind," says he, heedlessly, "I don't know I shall breakfast at home, so keep them, if you like;"—and, pressing his heels against his sorrel's sides, ambled off. I stood agaze after him, to see which way he went, and saw him take the road to the Moat-house. "Ah!" thought I, with a prick at my heart, "it's there, belike, thou'lt break thy fast, on hot cakes and ale, and have all the women-folk vying with one another which can make the most o' thee; howsoever, though thou rides and I walk, I know the nearer turn." An' so, cut across to the farm, and got there sooner than he.

The men were already gone to work, and the big kitchen was empty, but I could hear Gillian singing like a lark, in the pantry. Thither I went, and found her all alone, up to the elbows in flour. "Well, you're early," says she. "I *am* early," say I. "I've brought a few mushrooms for the farmer's breakfast."—"Thank you," says she,

"since he's not here to thank you himself, and set them down anywhere but here, for they will only be in my way."—"Perhaps I am in the way too," say I. "Since you think it worth naming, perhaps you are," says she. "Pray excuse plain speaking." And laughed so prettily and merrily withal, that I had not the heart to be offended. So there she kept rubbing the butter into the flour, in a great earthen pan, and I stood looking on, in silence, though bid to go. "One would think you had never seen a cake made before," says she; "are you taking a lesson?" "I will, if you'll give it me," say I. "Oh, no!" says she, "there's secrets in all trades, more in special in making of pastry, and, as I told you just now, you had better be off, for you may not like the cake so well an' you see how 'tis made." "Yes, I shall, for the sake of the maker," said I. And just then a moss-rose, that was tucked somewhat too carelessly into the laces of her stamel waistcoat, fell to the ground. I picked it up, and was going to restore it to her, with the simplest air in the world, when, for what whim I knew not, she suddenly gives me a box on the ear that made the flour fly out of her hands. "What's that for?" say I, turning very red. "For being so troublesome," says she, turning very red too, heaven and earth knew why. "And I wish to goodness you would not come here, making my cake heavy, so pray go away, and—and—I beg your pardon if I hurt

you."—"Hurt me?" say I, "you've hurt me very much! I suppose I've my feelings." Which set her a laughing. "Oh, very well, madam," quod I, waxing hot, "what possesses you this morning I should find it difficult to make out, if I wist not who's riding over to breakfast. I hope the cake mayn't disagree with him." And was going off in dudgeon, when she catches me by the flap of my jerkin. "Jack!" cries she, "are you joking? Who's riding here to breakfast?"—"You trow well enow, Gill," say I, clutching my skirt from her, "so don't worsen it by lying."—"On my faith I know not!" cries she, still holding on to me,—"Come, tell—I declare to you I expect no one—who is't, Jack? Master Francis?"—"Oh, what a brave guess!" cried I, laughing derisively, "an' you looked for him not! Good den, Mistress Gillian. Don't forget the mushrooms, he's fond of them in a game-pie."

And so off, leaving her in a maze, and, looking back as I got to the end of the farm-yard, could discern her through the open door, standing still in the pastry, and lifting the corner of her apron to her eyes. It might be a tear, it might be flour had got into them; but whatever it was I was about to spring back, when I saw Master Francis ride up to the gate. "Hallo, Jack," says he, "what, here before me? Why, you've been fighting with the miller!" and burst out a laughing.

"No more fighting than yourself," said I, roughly; and giving my face a smear with my sleeve, the cloth was all whity. This provoked me, to look so like a goose, and I pushed by him with a little rudeness. He looked at me surprised, but did not seem to think it worth minding; and, springing off his sorrel, looped the bridle over the pales. I did not look back after him, but knew he went in, because I heard the door bang, and the shrill sound of Dame Hathaway's voice.

How glooming the day now seemed, all o' suddain, though the sun was still shining brightly! I cared no longer, not I, how many hares and fawns fled through the fern; I could only think of Gillian and Master Francis laughing at me in the pantry. As I pushed on through the copse-wood, not much minding how I scratched myself, so I got home at the shortest rate, I overheard Squire Heriot, Master Francis's father, a talking to his bailiff t'other side the hedge. And "Gamel," says he, "if the old reeve won't pay, we must distrain and eject him, for 'tis my notion he can if he will, and I care not to have such a pestilent knave on my land, always prating of the old times. Why, he was the old Abbot's right hand! knew everything, from the stable to the pig-stye; took toll of every boll of grain, mulcted every sack o' turnips, and feathered his own nest pretty warmly, we may be secure; else how hath he fared, without work, through

these perilous times?"—"Who calls my father a dishonest man?" cry I, bursting through the coppice. "Hey, young fellow," says the Squire, taking a step back, "wert thou playing the spy?"—"No more playing the spy than my father hath played the rogue," quod I, "he's an honester man than you."—"Take that, rascal!" cries the Squire, switching me smartly across the face. "And take that in return," quod I, springing on him like mad, and shaking him. "Hilloa! hoy!" shouts Master Francis, riding his sorrel up the slope as hard as he could, "who's that collaring my father? Jack, art thou beside thyself?"

Looking round at him, as I dropped my hand, I spied the rose, Gillian's moss-rose, in his button-hole. Oh, I felt as if a shrew-mouse had just run over me! "Your father called my father a rogue, Master Francis," quod I, "and moreover, is going to turn him out of house and home; so, now, if you're for a bit of filial piety, let's fall to; I'm your man. We'll see which of our fathers' sons can hit the hardest." And, with that, put myself in a posture of offence. Master Francis——

I say, Madge, turn these crabs, or they'll be burnt as black as your shoe.

CHAPTER II.

MOTHER MUMBLEGRACE AND THE BEAR-WARDEN.

MASTER FRANCIS's face turned deep red, and, with a look I shall never forget, he sprang off his sorrel, and in an instant, or ever I was 'ware, by some sleight of his, I fancy he'd learned of a Cornish man, caught up my two hands by the wrists, twisted his ankle round mine, and had me down in a moment.

"That's not fair!" cried I, struggling to rise, while he stood astride over me; and, at the same instant, "Have at him, lad!" cries Squire Heriot, triumphingly, and would have hit me again with his stick, when his son stayed his hand.—"No, father, no," says he, "I won't have him struck now he's down—he's my captive, not yours, and you must let me do what I like with him. Retire, I pray you, and leave me to make my own conditions."—"So be 't, lad," says the Squire, grinning, and looking uglier than he ever did before in his life; "thou'rt more than a match for him, so I'm not afraid. Beshrew me, but that was a neat throw; as clever a thing as ever I saw, Frank!"

—And, chuckling over it, he and Gamel went off. Master Francis looked after him, so that I saw not his face for a while; but, as soon as he turned it about upon me, I saw every trace of passion was gone from it. Immediately I began to cool too. Stepping aside from me,—"Now, Jack," says he, quite composedly, "get up and go to your work; and don't be such a fool another time."—"Master Francis," said I, scrambling up—"Not a word, sirrah," says he, "be off!" Looking me down as he spake, after such a commanding fashion, as that I durstn't do otherways than as he bade me, retreating homewards with a heart ready to burst.

A step brought me at once out of the chase to the open glade, whereon stood our low, heavy-roofed cottage, under the oaks; and oh, how peaceful and cheerful it looked in the morning sun, with my sister Audrey in her red petticoat and white shift-sleeves, standing in the cottage door! She was talking with an old woman that went by the name of Goody Mumblegrace, whom some held for a witch, and others avouched for harmless. And "Jack!" cries Audrey, all blithe, "we have had a peck of trouble this morning with the churning; so we thought at last that it must be bewitched, and sent for Goody, and she says she make the butter come in a trice by burying it."—"Burying it?" quod I; "think twice, Audrey, ere thou waste such a lot of good cream—besides, I'm not overly sure I like dealings

with the black art."—"Let me alone for it, there's no mischief," says Goody, with an unpleasant leer in her eye; and, tying the cream up in a strong kitchen cloth, for all the world as though 'twere a pudding, she puts another cloth over it to keep off the dirt, and then, signing to a spade, bids me dig a reasonable big hole two or three feet deep. But I declined meddling in the business, on which she, with a gesture of impatience, cries, "Lawsake, what geese some folk do be!" and, giving the cream to Audrey to hold, digs the hole herself. Then buries the pudding, for so I may call it, covers it in, and walks three times round it, muttering, "Fogrum, pogrum, diddledy ogrum," or some such stuff. Then chuckles, peers into my face, and says, "Well, lad, what thinks thee o't?"—"I suppose," say I, "that's the pudding's burial service. Pray, how long may 't be afore the transmogrification, or whate'er thou terms it, takes place?"—"Well," sayth she, "twelve hours is sure to make all safe: but I thinks, this time, we needs only wait two or three."—And therewithal, sets herself down without ceremony on a milk-bucket, turned topside-totherway, at our door, and commences spinning tow off a distaff she'd brought with her. Just at this time, our mastiff began to rage and strain against his chain, and our little dogs scampered in-doors in a mighty hurry; while at the same minute, a man, near at hand, spake roughly,—"Be quiet, then, Bruin! take that, sir!"

and a bear-warden made his appearance, leading a muzzled bear, and having a drum at his waist, and on his shoulder a monkey, dressed fantastically like a lady. The man was an unshaven, haggard-looking fellow, and seemed a-weary. "Can'st tell me master," quod he, "how far on 'tis yet to Wymondham, for I'm foot-sore and hungry?"

"You've many a gay mile to go yet," quod I, "ere you see Wymondham. But sit you down there where you be, and we'll find you some breakfast,—only, mind the bear."

"Nay," sayth the warden, "he'll be as quiet as a lamb —that is, an' you lock up your dogs, for he's deadly ferocious to the whole genealogy of them. We've had fine sport, master, in Devon, for I've been a long round this summer wi' my beastés, and Bruin was everywhere victorious. At last, the folk got tired of losing their dogs and never hurting the bear, and grew savage with us both and with Jacko too, 'cause he bit the children's fingers; so we made ourselves scarce in them parts, and time enough too, for the people are rising."—"About what?" quod I.—"Marry," sayth he, "there are no two of a mind. Some would ha' no justices, othersome no gentlemen, some no jails, some no lawyers, some no priests, some no king; but, above all, inclosures must everywhere down, though to what re-division upon what rule, I've not ascertained. But my throat's dry, master; give me a drink of small ale, and I'll tell thee more."

So I brought him a horn of ale, and gave another to Goody, and Gillian brought each of them a flour dumpling, the heel of a loaf and some cheese. Whereat they both blessed us, and the warden tied his bear to a stake and gave him and the monkey some of his leavings; and I locked up the dogs and went in with Audrey to get our own breakfast, just within the open casement. Then sayth she, "Thou art late; father hath broken his fast, and been an hour a-field: but oh, Jack! what's come to thy cheek? There's a wale all across."

In sooth, I had been thinking on so many matters, I'd forgot the smart of the switch the Squire had given me; but when I found it had left its mark, I turned as red as fire.—"It's nothing. An accident," quod I.—"Then what makes you colour up so?" quod she, looking hard at me; "and here's the print of five fingers in flour, on the flap of your coat! Whatever hast been about?"—But I would not say; and, looking forth of the casement, said, "Do look at the monkey! He's got a three-cornered bit of silk by way of mantle, and is ever and again flinging it over his head and straightening it on his shoulders, and straining his head this way and that, to try to see whether the peak hangs straight down behind. Was ever such a comical vermin!"—And, with my bread and cheese in my hand, I leaned out at the window, and talked with the man.—"So they want to put down the gentry, do they?—

the men of Devon," quod I.—"Aye, master," quod he.—"Well," quod I, "don't you think we might do without them?"—"There's something to be said on both sides," quod he, cautiously. "Tell me your own mind, afore I tell mine."—"My mind is, that they are an overbearing, pestilent, selfish, hard-hearted set," quod I, "and that we could spare them very well."—"They are as you say," returned he, "many of them hard-hearted, selfish, pestilent, and overbearing. Howbeit, among poor men, I've found them that are all those things too. With regard to the laws, I take them as I find them. Sometimes they protect me and my bear; then I like them. Sometimes they clap me into prison; then I curse them. My own private opinion, master, is, *down with them that's in power*. But if we had them down that are in power to-day, poor men, and maybe worse men, would be in power to-morrow. So, to what good? Only show me, I say, that I shall be the richer man for destroying the inclosures, and my bill-hook shall be in your hedge the next moment."—"Not in mine, prithee, when there's so many to choose from!" quod I.—"Why not in yours?" said he. "One hedge is as bad as another. Once raise the cry, 'down with inclosures;' and they all must fare alike. I'd as soon have yours down as any!"—"What, after giving you your breakfast?" said I.—"Why not?" said he, "if the thing's bad? The Squire might as well say to you, What, after

that Christmas-feast I gave you, when the hogshead was set running?"—I held my peace, and he continued to eat his breakfast. While he did so, I moodily hacked at a piece of wood with my cheese-knife; and, the whim taking me, carved it into a little grave-stone, whereon I writ:—"Sacred to the memory of a mort of good cream, wasted at the instigation of Mother Mumblegrace, Sept. 14, 1548." And set it up on end where the cream lay yburied.

While I did so, I noted the old witch-wife glance first on my coat-flap and next on my swollen cheek and mutter, "A woman's mark, and a man's mark."—"How wist ye that, Goody?" said I, starting.

"Never you mind," returned she. "I kens a heap o' things more hard to make out nor that. And now let's dig up the cream. Bring a bowl and a rolling-pin, mistress."

The bear-warden stared to see what she would be at; but, without heeding him, she dug up the cream, poured it, all in a curdle and clot, into the bowl, put one end o' the rolling-pin therein, whirled it smartly round for five or ten minutes; and, sure enow, the buttermilk separated itself from the butter, e'en as though it had been churned. "There, mistress," sayth she, with a kind of disdainful triumph, "take and beat it out well under running water, salt it, and clap it up into pats."—"Live and learn!"

quod the bear-warden with admiration; "I never before saw butter made after *that* fashion!"—"Some say," whispered I to him, "she's ——," and gave a roll of my head. "Oh!" muttered he in return, and cast at her a look of mingled fear and dislike, as much as to say, "I know what thou art now—and shall not marvel at aught thou dost, though thou fliest up to the moon."

Meantime, Audrey comes forth of the house, all smiling, with a pat of fresh butter on a platter. Who could choose to think of powers of evil that work in darkness, in the glad sunlight of her face? The bear-warden blinked, and then looked hard at her; he seemed to prefer considering the young woman to the old one.—"See what nice butter!" cries she, handing it round. "Nay, you shall taste it." And commenced laying it thickly on the new brown bread, just within the door, and cutting off large slices.—"Give a slice to Jacko too, please, mistress," quod the bear-warden, "an' bless your pretty blue eyes! He loves it as a pole-cat loves brains. Hah! see to the rogue, how he licks the butter off first, and turns the bread to see if there be any o' t' other side! . . . Give some to Bruin as well, mistress; he loves butter and honey too. Thou shouldst ha' seen him upset a Devonshire hive, and get stung about the nose for 's pains! Oh, but to hear him roar, and to see him fight at the bees! and to see the bees fight with him! an how

he rolled! an' how they stung! 't was as good as a mummery-play!"

Just at this moment we heard angry voices behind the house. Audrey turned pale, and ran in; and presently I heard her give a faint scream, and then I ran in too, and out into the croft behind. There were my father and two men, one of whom I knew for Gamel, the squire's bailiff.

Your grandfather, lads, was not at all of my build—he was a little spare man; and having married late in life, not till after the dissolution of the monastery to which he had been reeve, he went among men for an old man, to be the father of two such young people as Audrey and me. For at the time I'm telling of, she was but eighteen, and I was twenty. He was as I tell you, a spare man, a world too shrunken to fill out the old suits he wore; and, I was near to saying, I could ha' carried him under one o' my arms, and another the like of him under the other, and ne'er been the worse for 't; but, however, I could carry *him* as easy as a nurse carries a babe. Now, seeing how tottery and far gone in years he was, was it not a moving thing to see such an old man all of a tremble with fear and rage, shaking his head at 'em and saying, "As sure as I'm alive, I can't do it! As sure as I stand here, I have not the money... no, not a dodkin more than I say."—"And if thou hadst, old boy," says Gamel,

in an insulting, aggravating way, "'t would not stead thee, for the Squire has bidden us make a clear riddance o' thee and thine off the premises, afore another day is out; and if thou goes not peaceably, we'll unroof the house and clap thee in prison for the money thou owest." —"My curse on him and thee," cries my father, a-shaking of his trembling fist at him; "what possesses him, thus to hale out an old man born on the land, as if he were a dead cat, only fit to cast on a dung-hill?"—"For why, but that thy son fell on him, and had like to ha' murdered him," says Gamel, "had not young Master Francis come up and gi'en him as clean a throw as ever I knew in my life. I saw it with these eyes."—"Tell the whole truth an' thou tells any o't, Master Gamel," cried I. "What did I hear him saying to you of my father afore I touched him? Wasn't he calling him cheat and thief? Murdering him, quotha! When I only gave him just the least little shake. A common man would ha' taken such a thing of another common man, and thought no more on't; and why should your gentry be so brittle?"—"Did he call me cheat, lad?" says father. "I thank thee for avenging my quarrel, since I was not by to strike a blow myself."—"*You* strike a blow!" sneers Gamel. "Well! it might have killed a fly."—"Deride no infirmities," quod I; "don't insult those you come to injure."—"Let be, let be, lad," says father, turning away to the house;

"we'll clear out an' he bids us, though it be to shelter wi' the rooks and crows. He'll have an old man's curse."—"That will do none of us any good, father," said I. "I'll go and seek Master Francis. Somehow, I fancy he'll see us righted."

CHAPTER III.

THE MOLECATCHER'S MORALISING.

"STAY," cries the bear-warden, who had attentively listened to all that passed, "wait a minute for me, master, and I'll company thee as far as our roads lie together. I'll soon pull up my tent-pegs.—"Ah, friend," said I, "your bear won't like to go as fast as I shall. Fare thee well, and God speed thee." And started off.—"Jack, dear Jack!" cries Audrey, running after me, and flinging her arms round my neck, "mind what you do, lest you make bad things worse. Oh! don't have ill words, much less blows, with Master Francis."—"What, are *you* in love with him too?" cried I, stopping short, and looking fixedly at her.—"I?" cries she, amazedly; "my sole thought is for you!"—and fixed her honest blue eyes upon me, with a look that enabled me to read through them her dear, innocent soul. I kissed her cordially, saying, "Trust in me;" and went on.

It was near upon three miles to the Hall. When I got through the chase, out upon the flat, open ground, I

could make out a hawking party sweeping along the river side. There was a young lady in green velvet, with a white plume in her cap, whom I made out to be Mistress Beatrix, from the Castle, some six miles further off, and all the others seemed to be of her party, save Master Francis, who rode by her bridle. I saw 'twas useless to seek him at the Hall, and guessed he would see Mistress Beatrix home; so adjudged it my best course to make for the Castle, which, as I walked, and he rode, I should not reach much before the hawking party was over; and, till it returned, I could hang about in the wood. In short, this was what I did. I got to the Castle first, and seeing it deserted, to outward appearance, save by a few hangers-on about the empty stables, I lay on the grass under cover, a' top o' the slope, idly chewing a straw, and looking down on the Castle, and wishing there were no castles anywhere, but cottages as good as castles all over the land.

While I lay thus, I heard a stir in the bushes behind me, and anon comes forth a hale, red-cheeked old man, whom I well knew for his skill in catching stoats, weasels, and other such pests of the farm; a thorough woodsman, and a godly man too, full of old saws and sentences. His name was Lamech a-Dene.—"Well," says he, "who would ha' thought of stumbling over you 'rt tracking summat?"—"Yes," said I, "I

am indeed, but my game's not up yet; I must wait awhile. What are you after?"—"A polecat," says he, "but not just hereabout. I found in its hole yesterday, (when the master o' the house was not at home, look ye), seven large eels, two toads, and twenty young frogs, between alive and dead, being just bit through the brain. There was a gourmandizard for ye! He'd got more than he wanted or was good for him, in his pantry."—"And so you emptied it for him," quod I, "leaving just enough to be good for his digestion. I say, Lamech, might not that hold good with some other and bigger pantries?"—"What mean'st thou?" sayth he, looking at me attentively.—"Should rich men's larders be o'erstocked," said I, chewing my straw, "when so many poor men have nothing in theirs?"—"A more witless lad than thou art," returned Lamech, "might ask a question should pose a wiser head than mine. It is written, 'Thou shalt not steal.'"—"But why," said I, "should some be placed in a condition wherein they have no choice between stealing and starvation, while others have more than they want?"—"Have at you, lad," quod he, softly laughing. "Set a snail to spin silk, and a wasp to make honey! We're *born*, some to be idle, some to work; that's the Creator's purpose."—"I don't believe it is," said I; "I believe He meant us *all* to work."—"Well," quod he, "I'm glad you don't say you believe He meant us all to be idle;

because there would then be no getting on with ye. What makes you think we don't all work, some in one way, some in another?"—"How does the master of yonder castle work?" quod I.—"Making laws for his country," said Lamech; "and cantankerous sort of work it sometimes is, I fancy. Moreover, he doesn't get paid his wages o' Saturday nights."—"Because he does not need them," said I.—"No, that's not the because," said Lamech; "I don't exactly know at this moment what it is; but I know that's not it."—"Well," quod I, "but our squire doesn't make laws—what's his use, I say?" —"What's the use of these flies buzzing about us?" said Lamech.—"Just the same," said I; "none at all." —"Then, if just the same," said Lamech, "I can tell thee, the squire is of a good deal of use; for these pestilent little idlers, as thou deemest them, speedily and greedily remove masses of decaying animal and vegetable matter that, without them, we should find it troublesome to get rid of. So there's your answer. 'Answer a fool according to his folly,' saith the wise man.—See, there's a kite flying off with a stoat, but it won't have the mastery. How irregularly it wheels i' the air. The stoat is biting it like mad. Look! down they tumble among the trees." —"Where did you get that saying you used just now," quod I, "about answering of a fool according to his folly?"—"Where but out of the Bible?" quod Lamech

"the Bible that's chained to the clerk's desk in church, that every poor man may read. Do *you* never turn its pages?"—"No," quod I, "we belong to the old religion, that is, we do, and we don't. Father holds to the creed of his old patrons, in most things, but yet he tells such queer stories o' them and their doings, as unsettle my faith in them and my respect for them; and Audrey holds to what my mother taught her of the Reformed faith altogether."—"So that you are a house divided against itself," quod Lamech, "which, we are told, will not stand."—"Ah! ours won't stand long," quod I, sighing.—"Read the Bible, lad, read the Bible," quod he, earnestly, "why dost thou not?"—"Father says 'tis the seed-corn of heresy," said I.—"More shame for him to say so," said Lamech, "for 'tis the word of God Himself. Well, the shades are lengthening, and I'm after my polecat, who will be thinking presently of his evening walk. Wilt come and see good sport."—"No," said I, "I'm in wait for game of mine own."—He stopped short, and looked at me earnestly. "What is't, lad?" said he; "a man?—art going to hurt him? Mind ye, 'Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.'"—"Never fear ye," said I; "I've no such thoughts in my head."—So we parted.

Anon returneth the hunting party, but without Master Francis. Then I was mad to think how I'd been wasting

my time; and commenced retracing my steps with all the speed I could, forcing my way through copse-wood, crossing ploughed fields, and evermore growing hotter, more weary, and more sick at heart. When I reached the Hall, I saw a groom leading Master Francis's sorrel round to the stables. Then my heart rejoiced; I thought I should have speech of him at last. I hardly wist what I meant to say; but I had a vague sort of trust in something noble in him that would make him intercede for an old poor man being thrust out of his home. Full of this confidence, I presented myself boldly at the door.—"Who art thou, knave?" sayth the house-porter. "Who is he?" quod another man passing by, and looking hard at me, whom I recognised for Gamel's companion in the morning's encounter,—"Why, he's the varlet that fell upon our master. Out upon the hound! Chase him away like a mad dog!"—"I want to have speech of Master Francis," quod I.—"A likely thing," quod he, "that Master Francis would vouchsafe a word with you, after your daring him to fight! Do you want another fall?"—And with jeers and contumely they drave me forth. Oh! how my spirit boiled as I posted home! Rich men! I hate ye all! Down with ye, every mother's son!—that was the burthen of my song. It was now getting dark. I had walked upwards of twenty mile. I was weary, hungry, athirst, mad with disappointment and

grief. As I pushed along under the hedgerow, now in the blackness of darkness, I saw the dim outline of a man, or what seemed such, only seeming of uncommon height, 'twixt me and the shadow, stealing noiselessly along, like a fox or a fitchet.—"Name o' mercy, who goes there?" quod I, my flesh creeping all over, for methought he might be the Evil One, sent to tempt me.—"Nay, who art thou?" quod he, stopping short, "stand and say." "Marry, I'm Jack o' the Lee, if I ken my own name," quod I, "though I shall be plain Jack without the Lee to-morrow."—"What mean'st thou by that?" quod the other. "Surely you know me? I'm Robert Ket."—"Grammercy, Master Ket, I knew ye not in the dark," quod I; "I feared you might ha' been some one worse." —"Nay, but," quod he, "step closer, and tell me as we go along what you said about not being Jack o' the Lee to-morrow."—"Marry, master tanner," quod I, "my meaning is soon told—we are to be turned off the Lee in twenty-four hours."—"Turned off the Lee!" quod he; "and for what?"—"Only for this," said I, "that I shook the old Squire by the collar for calling my father a dishonest man."—"Hah, hah, hah!" laughed he loudly; and I stood at pause, for I wist not at whom he was laughing.—"Famous!" cried he.—"Is it?" said I. "Pray tell me where the jest lies, for I can't see't, for the life o' me."—"Jack," quod he, "step nearer to me, my

man. Good things you wot not may come out of this. 'Behold what a great fire a little spark kindleth!' So say the parsons. This spark may set the country in a flame. It shall, as sure as I'm Robert Ket—I only wanted an example. Be guided by me, who am your true friend, and you're a made young man. Here's my hand upon't."—"Strange words are these, my master," said I, hanging back; "I should like to understand them a little better afore we shake hands on't."—"Thou shalt know all in time," quod he. "Meanwhile, tell me, owest thou not the Squire a grudge?"—"Certes I do," quod I.—"You shall pay it off," said he. "Dost like to see poor men kept down by rich ones?"—"No," said I.—"That shall be all changed," quod he. "Enough for to-night. Meet me to-morrow at dusk, by the spot where the old stone cross used to stand, where the four roads meet; then you shall hear how matters go. Will you come?"—"I will, master," said I.—"Let's shake hands," said he.—So I gave him my hand somewhat suspiciously; for he bore the character of a factious, turbulent fellow, and I wist not what mischief I might be drawn into. But misfortune makes men desperate; so I grasped at the shadow of I knew not what. And thus we parted.

Reaching home, I saw by the lights flitting from window to window that all was astir within. And no sooner came I within the threshold, than Audrey runs up

to me, all full of tears, and puts her arm about my neck. —"What now?" said I, expecting to hear of some new misfortune.—"Nothing, Jack, nothing," she answers, still shedding tears, "only thou'st been so long away, and I've been so anxious, and there's been such a power of things to do, and father has been so queer, and it seems so sad to leave the old place—so that, somehow, my heart seems ready to burst."—"Where's father?" said I.—"Out in the garden, with spade and lantern," says she, "and I can't think what about, but he bade me on no excuse to go near him. He's for flitting to-night."—"To-night! where to?" said I.—"Into the forest, off from the abbey-land.——Mindest thou not an old woodcutter's lodge, deserted and half-ruined, in the heart of the wood? Well, there we're to harbour till we know which way to turn. Father has taken some of the live-stock there already, for 'tis such a removed place, he thinks we shall not be found out—for a while, at any rate—and I've been down there too, and swept it out; and cleared out ever so many spiders, frogs, and newts; but there's an old white owl in an ivy-hole, I could not, for pity o' my heart, dislodge; his case minded me so of father's. Thou knowest, Jack, we are no more to the Squire than the owl is to us."—"We ought to be, though," said I.—"And when the place is furnished and cleaned up, it will be very pretty," continued she, "with the hares and pheasants

all about, so, dear Jack, let's make the best o't."—"Where's Jack? is Jack come in yet?" cries my father, through the garden-door.—"Yes, father, here I am."—"Come out here, boy; I want thee."—So I followed him out into the garden.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MOONLIGHT FLITTING.

My father set down the lantern over against a pretty deep hole he had dug under a tree. "Jack," saith he piteously, "heave it up, will ye?—for I seem to have got no strength to-night." So I looked into the hole, and saw an old black pot or skillet, with a cover and a handle over the top, and, stooping down, I heaved it up; and was surprised to find how heavy it was. "Father," said I, "what's this?"—"Old titledeeds and parchments the abbot gave me to take care of," saith he. —"Here's something a good deal heavier," said I, "than parchments and title-deeds."—"Well, some bunches of old keys, may be, and—and other things the abbot may have given me in charge. They're mine, now, Jack, for he told me they should be, an' he ne'er came back to claim them, and he's dead." And, seizing the handle of the skillet with both hands, he set off with it into the house, with more alertness than I had thought was in him; bidding me fill up the hole carefully, so as no

one might see the ground had been disturbed. When I had done this, and gone in, I met him coming down from his chamber. He then bade me load a light truck at the door, which, it seemed, had already made one or two journeys into the wood, with such things as he picked out; and I found he carefully selected the prime of everything; and whatever was vile and refuse, he meant to leave behind. Thus, the good bedding, and his easy chair, and the best of the household utensils, were already removed; along with our best cow, our pony, pigs, and best poultry; but he was going to leave behind our old blind horse, our cart with a broken wheel, an old cow that had gone dry, some old hens that had done laying, and the chief of our fodder; and, withinside, the refuse furniture was so dispersed about, and made the most of, as that the house did not, at first sight, look disfurnished, but only unaccountable dreary and desolate, by reason that all the good pickings of its plenishment were gone. The old birdcage was left, but no bird in it; the old kennel, but no dog; and the key left in the door, that whoso would, might walk in.

But, before we started off, we all sat down to a good meal; and, though my heart was so sore, I was by this time so much in need of sustentation, that I drank deep and fed heavily. Then we cleared all things away, and drey tied on her hood, and my father put on his old

cloak, and we went forth. But, before we crossed the threshold, Audrey gave a wistful look all about, and said, "Oh, Jack, must we leave the place where we were born? and the chimney-corner wherein my mother used to sit? and the flowers she planted?"—I said, "We must," and drew her forth. Then, putting my arm about her, I said in a low voice, "Sister, thou'lt break my heart, an' thou grievest so for what we leave behind; for I shall think it has been all my doing."—"Oh no, Jack," says she, clearing up directly, "thou didst well and bravely, my brother, to strike a blow for our old father when he was defamed."—"Ah, but," said I, "may be I was too hot and quick. Gillian had crossed me just before, and it made me feel savage."—"Well, Jack," sayth she, smiling up at me, "thou kens I ne'er was in love, for a very good reason; I've never had anybody to fall in love with; but I can't say I wish my time were come, for love doesn't seem to make you and Gillian very happy."—"Come, children, we lose time," says father; so I push away the truck. Coming to the uneven ground, my task was not very easy, and I made way with some difficulty; but, slowly as I progressed, father followed after me still slower, though Audrey held him under the arm. At length, having got on for about half-a-mile, Audrey cries after me, "Stop, Jack; come and see to father."

I turned about, and saw them at pause, my father

seemingly unable to come on. I went to him and said, "Cheer up, father—I'll help thee a bit." But he says, "Lad, I'm so done up, I can't stir."—"I must carry thee, then," quod I, "and come back afterwards for the truck." And went to heave him up, without expecting much of a weight; instead of which, he seemed all o' sudden grown so heavy that I staggered under him. However, I started off with him, at last; and bethought me, I'd heard tell how much heavier dead bodies were than living ones, and how that father was dead-tired, besides half-dead with age and infirmities, and it must be all those together that made him hang across me like a sack. But, all at once, something fell to the ground and rolled along, and he lugged at my hair and cried, "Stop, lad! stop." And, as I set him down, there escaped from out of a hole in his pocket, a heap of gold pieces that rolled some little way, one after another, and then stopped. "Why, father!" cried I, amazedly, "whence comes all this treasure?"—"From the abbot's skillet," answered he in some confusion, and hastening to gather them up; but, directly he moved, more and more coins fell out of him. "I'd best get quit of 'em all at once," quod he, giving himself an impatient shake, "or we shall leave a file of 'em along the path, that will bewray us. Here, give me that red kerchief about thy neck."

So I gave him the kerchief, and he cast the gold pieces

into it, adding more to the heap, from divers parts of his raiment, and then tying the kerchief's four corners together. "Thou might'st as well ha' left it all in the skillet, and brought that along with thee," quod I. "Well, father, here's treasure unlooked-for! Why not go back to Master Gamel now, and settle arrears, and keep i' the old house?"—"Never! he shall never see one of these pieces," interrupts my father. "What, have I been saving 'em all these years, for *him?*"—"All these years! What then, you knew, all along, you'd got them? When you said you had not a—."—"Silence, boy!" cries my father, with great passion, "he'd ha' overreached me, an' he could; and he shall find I can overreach *him*. Aha!"—And a look I did not at all like, of mingled hate and cunning, disfigured the face of my poor father. He all at once seemed to me an altered man. Had I then never rightly known him before? "Go thy ways with the truck, lad," sayth he, "I can walk well enough now I'm disburdened. 'Tisn't over heavy to carry by hand, and we've not much farther to go."

It seemed a good step, though, before we got to our journey's end: but he would take no help; and we went on in silence. Our new shelter look disconsolate enough. However, we did not seek to make it look otherwise just then, but, having housed our goods, and set a weight

against the mossy door, we lay down on our bedding, just where we found it. Whether my father and Audrey slept, I know not; but I fell dead asleep the moment I was down, and did not wake till late in the morning.

When I awoke, it was with a strange sense of weariness and discomfort. Audrey had already straitened things, lit the fire, and set the breakfast. "Father is burying his money again," quod she, "let's tidy the place a little for him, Jack, ere he comes back."—So we set to work with alacrity, and made a great clearance. There were so many things to do, that we were hard at work all day. Nothing deadens sorrow like labour. I remembered my appointment with the tanner; and, towards nightfall, went down to the Stone Cross. As I pursued my way, I was surprised to find so many men about in the wood that I had deemed so lonely. I came upon them singly, or in twos or threes: most of them shaggy, unwashen fellows, who scowled on me, and went their ways without good-morrow. I did not like their being so near about us, in our defenceless condition. I had scarce reached the stone cross, when Ket came riding up, with another behind him on the same horse. Two others, whom I had not seen, rose up, out of the bushes. "Come," said he, shortly, "we are late—follow hard after me." And rode on. I now what to make of this, but followed with the

others, who said not a word. After half-an-hour's riding and walking, the latter part through the wood, we came out upon a good wide glade, with a big oak in the midst. To my surprise and fear, hundreds of men were round it, standing and lying about. Ket rode up to the oak, leaped off his horse, and looked around; whereon they all set up a deafening cheer.

"Friends!" quod he, "I'm late." (Another cheer, as if he'd said something clever.) "But I've had much to do." ("Hurray," again.) "Hear me, my masters,—I can't hear myself speak." (A faint hurray in the distance, from those who could not hear what he said.) "We're all honest men and true." (Cries of "All, all!") "We'll stick by one another." ("We will! we will.") "Through thick and thin." ("Through thick and thin.") "Through right and wrong." ("Hallo," cries one, "that's going too far.") "Who's that disaffected knave?" cries Ket, interrupting himself; "rap him over the head. Through life and death, I meant to say; through thick and thin, through life and death; one and all." (Response, pretty unanimous, "One and all.") —You must know, lads, the tanner mouthed his sayings a good deal, and frowned, opened his eyes very wide,—this way,—and sawed the air with his arms when he spake: which added a good deal of impression to his peeches, e'en though there were no great body of sense

in them. And he went on, haranguing, somewhat after this manner:—"Now, friends, I've a word or two of plain common sense and reason to address to you, for I know it's no use to try to put you off with anything else. There are things we want, and there are things we don't want. I'll give you a few examples—We all want bread—" (*Response:* "Agreed, agreed.") "We want a roof over our heads, and coats to our backs." ("We do.") "We want justice, liberty, equality!" ("Cries of "Yes, yes!") "But we don't want arable land turned into pasture, do we?" ("Cries of "No, No!") "Nor hedgerows?" ("No.") "Nor park-palings?" ("No.") "Nor game-laws, nor gentry, nor Bibles, nor justices, nor jails. There's a saying in Scripture, friends, —so this holy man at my right hand tells me—whose business it is (and not ours), to know,—to this effect:—'Go to, now, ye rich men! howl and weep.' Therefore, if we make them howl and weep, we've Scripture warrant for't. And then, we'll be rich men in their places." "And then, are *we* to howl and weep?" said a voice in the crowd.—"Speak when you're spoken to," says the tanner, looking fierce. "When will people learn manners?"—"When we're gentry, I suppose," says one of the people.—"Now," says the tanner, "we've grievances to redress. That's why we're here. If there's any man here that hasn't some grievance to redress, let him hold

up his hand. I don't see any. Then we've all grievances. But we'll hear a few. You man with the black eye, we'll hear what you've got to say. Speak out, now! we're all friends."—"Well, my grievance is this," says the man, speaking thick, and scratching his head; "Master says to I,—no, first I ses to master—that's not it neither—I must go farther back."—"Don't make your story too long, though," says the tanner, "because, you see there are a great many more to be heard."—"Well, the long and short o't is, then," says the man, speaking faster, "that master and I had words: and he called me a name which hurted my feelings, because I didn't understand it, which made it all the worse."—"What did it sound like?" says the tanner, "may be I may have heard it before."—"There were two words joined together," says the other, "he called me an ignio rumpus."—"Ignoramus, more likely," says Ket, impatiently; "my lad, you mar your own story in the telling o' 'it. Your, grievance shall be redressed, all the same. Step back and make way for another.—Now, then, Jack!"

CHAPTER V.

THE TANNER'S RENDEZVOUS.

I STARTED, on hearing myself thus abruptly addressed. "What now, master?" said I.—"Step forward," says the Tanner, "and tell your story without fear. We are all friends—every heart will sympathise with you." I hung back. "I've no story to tell, master," said I. "No story to tell?" echoes he, looking hard at me. "Every man knows the sore of his own heart," said I. "Mine will smart none the less for showing. I've no mind to uncover it afore strangers."—"Well spoke, young 'un," said some one at my elbow; and looking round, I saw the bear-warden. "Well," says the tanner, frowning hard, "this is queer, after what passed between us. It's no great matter, however. Here are more grievances than we shall get through to-night."

"Mine to begin with," says the bear-warden, roughly. "Just because I drank a cup too much the night afore last, and spoke a quarrelsome word or two to a knave ucy to me, the Norwich authorities clapped me

into the stocks, and my bear into the pound; and what's befallen my monkey I know not, for he's stolen or strayed. Down with them that's in power!"—"Hurray!" cries the tanner. "Hear him, boys, give him three cheers!" So they went nigh to split their noisy throats.

When they were quiet, a gray-headed, sorrowful-looking man stepped forth. "Friends," says he, in a quiet, hushed voice, but so earnest, that its sad tones were heard all around, "hear what I have to say about grievances." —"That we will, Daddy Lorn," cried two or three voices. "I'm not going to speak of my own," resumed he; "as that young lad said, every man knows the sore of his own heart; I'm going to speak of them that are general, and them that should be remedied. When I was a boy, the land was full of abbeys and priories; we went to mass, we were confessed, and had absolution. That's all put down now; I don't say whether for better or for worse, for I'm an unlearn'd man; they do say, and I do believe, that there had got to be much sin and much sensuality among the monks; they do say, and I do believe, that they imposed many frauds upon us; that they made images to roll their heads and wink their eyes, and what not, to impose upon the credulous.——"—"Lies, lies, my son," interrupted the stout man that had ridden behind the tanner, and who, now removing his cap to wipe his head, showed a shaven crown. "That's neither here nor

there," pursued the speaker, "I'm not up to them things. Certes, I don't see how the head of the same Saint could ha' been in two shrines at once, nor how one image of our Lady should mind our prayers more than another—no, nor yet how the Pope could, for a few pence, absolve from all the sins, not only that had been, but should be committed. No, nor yet how the bread and wine on the altar should, by a few words, be made our Lord's real body and blood. I say I can't decide on these subtleties; but this I know, that the monks always residing in their convents in the centre of their estates, spent their money in the country and among their own tenants; I know that they employed many who would work, and fed and cherished many who could not, that they were kind to the sick, and generous to the needy, and made kind and indulgent landlords. The Abbots and Priors often gave leases at an under value, and their tenants not only paid low rents, but had a ready market for their produce; whereas now, our landowners spend their money in London, leave us under the power of an unjust steward, and, to supply his and their requirements, leave no oppression or rapacity unexercised. And that, friends, is *my* grievance." A general murmur of concurrence arose; and men's faces seemed to catch from one another a dissatisfied, lowering expression.

"Yes!" says Ket, folding his arms, "this man has

spoken well. He has told us the root of the matter. No good will come to the land under its new laws, new fashions, and new religion. We must have back our old masters, our old priests, and our old altars. And now, while we're all in this solemn frame, let's sing a hymn. Give one out, Father Conyers."

Then the disguised priest, who answered to that name, without more ado, mounts on a fallen tree, and gives out, stave by stave, a rhyming jingle, half Latin, half English, that had a wild mixture of profanity, disaffection, and rough pathos in it. 'Twas set to an old church chant; and the sound of many voices, now soaring high, now sinking low, had somewhat mighty thrilling in it. After this, he began to preach a rhapsodical discourse, that inflamed the passions a good deal, and made us feel up to almost anything he might bid us. Then Ket, taking his place, begins in a business-like way, to settle how we were henceforth to gather, and how disperse, and what we should write in a letter to the king, and who should take it, and what arms we were to get, and where should be our head-quarters, which it was presently arranged should be at Mouse-hold, near mount Surrey. Then, suddenly catching me by the hand, he bade me give my other hand to the man next me, who happened to be the bear-warden; and crying out, "Join hands, all!" every man's hand was instantly locked in that of his neighbour. Then

cried he, grasping my hand like a vice all the while he spake, "So sure as we now joining hands, join faith and truth, join honour and life, join secrecy and faithfulness, so help us Queen of Heaven with her effectual intercession in this world, and life everlasting, Amen." I thrilled, and would have plucked away my hand, but could not. "And now," says he, without minding me, "scatter yourselves all. To-morrow eve, at the same hour, at Mouse's Hold; and let every man bring another. Farewell; scatter all. Jack, I want to keep you, to send with a letter to the Miller of Oxshott. Father Conyers, where are your tools?" The priest pulled forth a little writing-case, and sitting down on the felled tree, made a desk of his knees, and wrote, while I held his ink-horn for him, what the Tanner dictated, sitting alongside of him. Sure, never was such stuff. It ran someway like this:—

"Robin Nameless, and Scalp the priest, greeteth well Joc the Miller, and Ned the Carter, and Hob the Miller's son, and biddeth them that they beware of Guile in Field or Fold, House or Mill, Rack or Manger, and stand together in Our Lady's name; and biddeth Piers the Ploughman go to shrift, and confess his sins, and Hob the Miller's Son to come to the Mouse's Hold to-morrow night as soon as the Pole-star is up, and take with you a thousand men, and no more unless you find them.

I've had a call, Kings will fall, Miller you have ground small, small, small; look sharp, or thou shalt pay for all. Beware or ye be woe, no need to say moe, know your friend from your foe, list where ye go, have enough and say ho! And so biddeth your friend as ye serve him, Nameless and all his fellawes."

This precious missive being intrusted to me, without asking with your will or by it, I put it in the crown of my cap, and started on my errand; I say not with how little of good grace. As I brushed through the trees, I came once more upon the bear-warden. "Glorious times coming!" quod he, with a short, dry laugh. "We shall make Royalty shake presently in its shoes. What a jest! Who cares? Not I, for I've nothing to lose. My bear's in the pound, and I've lost my monkey. I'm thinking of stepping in to sup with you to-night, and talk matters over."—"Thank you," said I, coldly, "but you'll find bare larder and cold hearth. We have been turned out of doors."—"Wheugh!" said he, whistling. "Where are you now then? Where's your blue-eyed sister?"—"My blue-eyed sister is minding her own affairs, I hope," said I, no ways minded to tell him, "and I'm going to look after mine."—"Nay, quod he, "don't speak so crusty. I meant nothing but civil, and didn't know you were so unsociable. You know we are all going to be on an equality now, so a bear-warden's as good as a reeve: we

must act out our own principles. Why, when we've pulled down King Yedward and all his lazy lurdanes, I may kiss a countess if I like."—"And if she likes," said I. "I suppose, if all are to have equality, she will have an equal right of free choice with yourself."—"Why, no, I think not," says he; "at least, that's not how I understood it. We must inquire about that. Otherwise the gentry will fare as well as ourselves, after all."—"And why should not they?" said I. "Do you wish they should?" said he. "Why not?" said I. "All I want is my own right—I don't want them to be wronged."—"Ah," said he, "then you are no thorough-goer after all. Bob the Tanner won't be satisfied with that length, I'm thinking." —"Here, then, we part," said I, turning off the path, "Good night."—"*Where* did you say you were now?" says he. "I didn't say anywhere," said I, and trudged off. I was sick of him. What! that dirty, unshaven fellow, with his uncombed hair, and nails as black as soot, to fancy himself equal with *us?* and harp upon my blue-eyed sister? If I saw him go near her, I'd swing him into the horse-pond, that's all! Equality, indeed! Then I began to think whether I had any more right to think of him with such contempt than Master Francis of me. But yet, I would have it, there was a difference. But where? Of degree, or of kind? I could not make out. Then I mused what all this caballing and conspiring

would come to, and whether 'twere likely a set of poor, undisciplined men would be likely to pluck down the young king off his throne, that was guarded, doubtless, day and night, by the picked men of his realm; and whether, e'en supposing they could be taken at unawares, napping at their posts (harder than to catch a weasel asleep), 'twould be any good to harm the innocent boy, son of a good mother, well nurtured, and well affected to his people. Whether we should better ourselves by setting another in his place; say, Robin Ket, the print of whose five merciless nails I felt in my flesh at that moment. Why, suppose I neglected his present errand, would he make any bones of threshing me till his arms ached, suppose he had the power? He would not. And, suppose any general good were to ensue from this rising, would not a great deal of individual harm be inevitable? There would be no leisure for heeding particular cases amid universal upsetting. Where should I hide away Audrey and my father? Who would care for any harm that should befal either?—Or lament for me, more than a minute, if I got a death-blow?

All this made me gloomy enough. I sped my errand, and then posted home; but it was long past the hour when my father and Audrey went to bed. However, when I got to the hut, I discerned a long level ray of yellow light streaming through a chink. I peeped

through it, and saw Audrey all alone, in a white jacket cast over her dress, and her long, pale brown hair, as though she had been sleeking it, hanging in smooth, heavy tresses over her shoulders. She was sitting on a low stool before a smouldering fire; a Prayer-book on her lap, and her hands clasped round her knees; her eyes fixed, not on her book, but beyond it, as if in a muse. I whispered, "Hist, sister, hist!" She started, coiled up her hair, and arose, and I saw that her face was quite colourless. She came and let me in, moving some heavy weights she had set againt the old ricketty door. "Oh, Jack," says she, sighing deeply, "where *hast* thou been all this while?" I said, "Tracking game."—"Then, where is it?" said she. "Thou hast brought none with thee." I said, "Dragging the pond."—"Then where is the fish?" said she; "thou hast none." I said, "Walking about in the wood, looking after marauders. The chase is full of them; it will be well for thee to keep close, sister." She said, "I know there are some. They came begging to-day; and the bear-warden came this evening, to look, he said, for his monkey."—"If he come here again," said I, "I shall give him something he won't like. He's a bad one, that fellow; don't have anything to say to him, nor let him in."—"But how if he will come in?" said she. "Shut the door in his face," said I. "But the door won't stand a push," said she;

'not that I'm afraid of him, but I am of others. You, had better keep at home, Jack, an' you want to guard the house. A master's face is worth a brace of mastiffs."—"Well," said I, "I *will* keep in to-morrow, all day; and only go out for a mouthful of fresh air after sun-down."—"Thanks, dear Jack," said she gladly; "as long as you are by, or even within call, I crave no other company; but when you are beyond reach, and I know not where, I feel so lonely!—So now eat your supper. My father hath been long abed and asleep."

CHAPTER VI.

THE OAK OF REFORMATION.

"PERHAPS," thought I, as I laid my aching head on the hard log that was my pillow, "the bear-warden may have had a glimpse of Audrey to-night, through the chink, just as I did. There was nothing to hinder him. I wonder Towler did not fly at him. I'll stop every cranny in the hut to-morrow, and spar the old door. I don't want any foxes prowling about my hen-roost."

Then I thought of Gillian, and how silly we had been to quarrel, and what a chain of evil consequences had ensued from that breach of the peace. Had she not been so tart, I had not gone off in a huff, nor been surly with Master Francis, nor been at hand to overhear the Squire speak against my father. But then, after all, he had meant to distrain, if not eject us; but then, if I had not shaken him, Master Francis might have interceded. Ah, it was a bad job, altogether. What sinful mortals do be, when we let our passions get the better of us!

xt morning, while Audrey was milking, my father

said to me. "Son, what kept thee so late abroad, last night? I was not overly pleased, I can tell thee."—"Father," said I, "there were many men about in the wood, and I wanted to look after them."—"Indeed!" quoth he, looking sharply, "thou didst well, lad. Poachers, maybe?"—"A great many too many for poachers," said I, "there were hundreds."—"Good sooth!" cries he, all in a tremble, "what could they be about? Not looking after us, surely?"—"Us? Oh no, father! They had very different matters in their heads. I went along with them a good way, and we came upon an open place, where a man on horseback, with a shaven priest behind him, made a lot of speeches against the powers that be; and encouraged each man on the ground to tell his grievance. And he caught my eye, and bade me tell my grievance, but I would not."—"Right, boy, right," says my father, full earnest. "What business have they with us and our private matters? We *have* our grievances, though, all the same. Well, and so—"—"Well, and so a man stepped forth, whom they called Daddy Lorn, and he had such a piteous voice that it seemed to search the very heart, and make way for whatever he had to say. And what he said was so plain, and so unadorned, and so earnest, that it seemed as though it must be true and right."—"And what said he, lad?"—"He spake up for the old times, father, and

said that whatever the private vices of the monks might be, they lived upon their own estates, and made good landlords."—"Aha, he hit the right nail upon the head there, Jack," says father, hammering his own knee with his fist. "We shall never get on without them as we did with them. And what on that?"—"Then the priest led a psalm, and preached a sermon, all about the rights of the people, and the rights of the Church; and the privilege of resting on the bosom of such a loving Mother. Howbeit, he said little about God the Father."—"A godly man, though, may be," says my father, nodding his head. "Well, and what upon that?"—"Upon that, Robin Ket . . . Oh my goodness! I hadn't meant to let out his name."—"Tell e'e what, lad," says father, putting his hand impressively on my arm, "'tis a good sign when lads and lasses keep no secrets from father and mother. Why, an't we all in the same boat? and haven't I the longer head? Robert Ket, he's the tanner of Wymondham."—"Yes, father, and I don't like him much, he frowns and stares so, and has a blusty way of speaking. Well, he was the man on the horse, and when Father Conyers (that's the priest), had given over preaching, he took up the word and incited us to band together, and insist on our rights, and send a letter to the king."—"Stay, Jack," says father. "Now you're getting on too fast; this seems a serious matter. Insist

on our rights? Truly, we have many rights to insist on, but are we likely to better ourselves by insisting on them in this fashion? *Might* is right sometimes, at least so the saying is, but I don't quite believe it; and, at all events, they who are minded to put it to proof had better be quite sure they *have* might enough to support their right, before they begin, especially in affairs of the nation; for, observe me, Jack, *a defeated rebellion always strengthens the hands of Government.*"

There was such an impressive, oracular air about my father when he pronounced these words, that it carried with it the air of something profound and prophetical, and I stood for a few moments lost in thought.—"Here comes Audrey," said I, at length, "don't let's talk of it before her, father; 'twill only affrighten her."—"Best so, best so, lad," says he, bestirring himself. "Well, I thank thee for telling me all the matter so out of hand; and as thou seem'st to have discretion, all I say is, be watchful, be cautious, see whitherward this matter shall tend, or ere thou embarkest in it. We have much to lose, e'en as things are, be they right or be they wrong. Let's be quite assured we have much to gain, ere we help to alter them. Above all, keep away outlyers from our poor harbourage, all thou canst. I'm thinking, Jack, the sooner we get into a securer homestead, the better for us."

Audrey now setting the breakfast, we had no more private talk. Afterwards I bestirred myself to secure our fastenings; and father put his hand to one thing and another in a desultory way, without seeming to settle to anything, and hung much about the spot where I guessed his treasure was buried.

Towards sundown, I said to Audrey, "Well, now I'm off." "Give my love to her," says she, smiling. "To whom?" say I, stopping short. "Why, to Gillian, to be sure," says she gaily; "Dost think, Jack, I know not where thou'rt going? Good speed to your wooing, my brother."—I was on the point of saying, "Mine errand is another guess one, sister," but I held my peace and went forth. I trudged away, mile after mile, to Mouse's Hold.

When I got there, I found the hundreds of men were changed into thousands. They were standing, lying, or sitting, over a great extent of ground. Then thought I, there must be some serious public grievances universally felt, to have produced this general muster. Going from one group to another, however, I heard them parleying, each man with his fellow, very composedly, as though each man's own particular grievance were very easily carried just then. There seemed a good deal of curiosity concerning what was going to be done, also a good grumbling; but the topics of the grumblers

were diverse and desultory, and did not seem to me to carry enough weight with them to sanction a general rising, that involved in it the possible death of a king.

Up rides Robin Ket at last, and oh! what a cheer there was! Peal upon peal, making the hollow woods resound, and awakening each man's courage, by showing him how many there were to back him. This time, Ket was no longer in his miller's frock, but in a brave green jerkin, passemented with lace, and a white feather in his cap; only 'twas his upper half he had smartened, for his lower man was still encased in greasy leather. He was on a better horse too, and rode single, the priest following on his old one. He, this Father Conyers, was, as I afterwards found, one of those vagabond monks, who about this time went much about the country, infusing into the people a dislike of the established religion and government; against whom a pretty stringent law was aimed, including them among idle vagrants, who, if persistent in their vagrancy, should be enslaved for two years, by any who should seize them. For the rest, he was very little credit to his fraternity, either in the way of scholarship or self-denial, and had spent much less time in the scriptorium than at the ale-stake.—Well: Ket rides up to a commanding ground beneath a huge oak tree, that had a bench and table set under it, and which goes to this day,

by the name he then gave it, which is "The Oak of Reformation." Mounting on the table, to the intent he might be the better seen and heard, he commences this way, in a loud, clear voice, that might be heard a good way over the ground, though I'm bold to say, a good many that afterwards fought under him, never heard one word at all.—"Friends! I joy to see so many on the ground. A week ago I had scarce a man to stand by me; presently after, we counted by tens; last night by hundreds: to-night by thousands. This shows a general want, a general purpose, and a general combination to secure the purpose and remedy the want. I rejoice at it. Now then, why do we assemble? Tell me, my friends: Can a leveret like a stoat? No. Can a chicken like a fox? No. Can a poor man like a rich man? No. For wherein is the rich man open-handed, but in selfishness? Wherein is he kind, but to his own kindred! Wherein is he exorbitant, but in everything? Wherein is he merciful, but in nothing? Therefore, we have no fellow-feeling with the rich, we suffer by the rich, we hate them, and will pull them down. Once we could feed our cattle on the commons. Now the commons are all being enclosed. Once the landlord's wealth was in his tenants. Now we are being cast forth of our homes, like useless lumber. You may see whole miles of landed property without a smoking chimney. A sheep was once counted

as harmless an animal as the shepherd-boy under the hedge that tended him. But I tell you, my friends, that a sheep has become a more ravenous animal than a bear or a lion. It was better for Old England when the forests were full of wolves, than now, when sheep graze all the land we want for corn. And why is this done? Because there is an increased demand for wool, forsooth, at home and abroad. Can we eat our coats? Can we break our fasts on a flannel waistcoat? Moreover, there has been a great increase of gold and silver found in foreign parts, which has been brought to Europe, and has everywhere raised the prices of commodities; but meanwhile, the labourer's wages remain at the old rate, and they will not keep him from starving. Moreover, the profusion of the old king (who gave a fat abbey once to a cook, for making him a plum-pudding!) induced him to debase our coin. The good specie has been hoarded or exported, while we receive our hard earnings in base metal. Englishmen! is this to be endured?" Thereon ensued such a clamour of hooting, hallooing, and groaning, as I never heard before nor since.—"I like your tone," cries Ket. Again, on this encouragement, they let fly their voices.—"Well," says he, "I don't see any good in saying much more. You are all good men and true. Our grievances are, I believe, agreed on,—"—"Agreed, agreed."—"We must now proceed to action," says he. And forthwith began

to lay down the law: how many were to remain on the ground, under arms, how many scatter and be within summons, how many go in strong parties to the houses of the gentry, to make requisition for arms and food; and who were to be deputed to the perilous honour of taking the letter to the king. This document, which he seemed to have been making a draught of beforehand, was not so senseless a farrago as his letter to the miller, whatever scholaric men might think of it; and being read aloud and approved, some picked men, well mounted, were sent off with it. As we knew pretty well the embassy and letter would only be flouted at, this was tantamount to a declaration of war. Then Ket begun to consider and tell over the gentry's houses, and what resistance and what supplies might be severally expected; and anon he deputeth a party to go and demand arms of Squire Heriot, with me for their guide. I started and drew back.—"This young man," quoth he, laying his hand on my shoulder, without looking me in the face, "hath good need to be ready for this service. His aged, decrepit father hath been ejected, his home dismantled and unroofed, (I saw it this forenoon, with these eyes,) his chattels cast forth and set a-fire in the yard, his pales pulled up, his ricks pulled down, and, to add insult to offence, rude semblances of himself, his father, and sister, scrawled on the white walls; the old man tottering under

a money-bag, the young one sprawling on the ground with a gentleman's son standing over him, the girl—"—"Hold," said I, unable to stand any more, "I'll do your hest, Master Ket. *His* roof shall smoke for it, or I'm not Jack of the Lee!"

CHAPTER VII.

FIRE AND PILLAGE.—A PLUM CAKE.

THE pale moon-light was shining coldly on the old grey walls and black wood-nogs of the Squire's mansion, as we, a hundred men strong, drew about it. We took no care to conceal an approach, we felt so sure of our numbers. One Absalon, who took the lead, pulled the great bell, which set a dozen dogs fiercely barking.

"Who's there?" cries a porter from within, whose quavering voice betrayed he had already taken some alarm. "Open the door and you'll see," says Absalon. "Why should I open the door before you answer my question?" returns the porter, "if you are an honest man, can you be afraid to tell your business?"—"Is that the way you receive your master's friends?" retorts Absalon, "go, call him hither, that he may hear my errand; and see thou gett'st not a rap on thy fool's pate for being so suspicious." A lattice over the porch now opens from above; and Master Francis, putting forth his head, says, "Whence this intrusion, fellow?"—"Fellow me no

fellows," says Absalon, "I've a hundred fellows at my back to help my errand. We come from Bob, the Tanner of Wymondham, to demand all the arms you have in the house, in the name of the country."—"Wait till I bring them to you!" says Master Francis contemptuously, and closeth the lattice. "Is he going to bring them?" says one of our men to another doubtfully. "Not he; he was only making game of us," says Absalon, furiously pulling the bell again till the wire brake. "Go round, some of you, and see if there be not some other way in."—"There's no other way, master," say I, my heart beginning to smite me. "Go see, however," quoth he; and a party went off. Then, with the butt-end of his firelock, he commenced hammering at the door. "I tell you what, knaves!" cries Master Francis, again looking forth, "you are breaking the laws of your country, whose name you take in vain, and will be hanged every man Jack. We are stronger in here than you think; armed, and well bolted and barred within stone walls. If you make further aggression, we will fire upon you."—"Take that, then," cries Absalon, firing at the open window. Master Francis instinctively started back, and we heard a girl's scream of sudden pain. "Villains!" cries Master Francis in desperation, "you have hurt my sister!" And closes the lattice and withdraws the light.

He had a sister about fourteen years of age, a young

gentlewoman much beloved by her family and friends, who commonly resided with her aunt somewhere about Court, but who, it would seem, had now returned home. I winced at hearing her cry out; her voice minded me so of Audrey. But my comrades laughed and jeered. "We're in for't now, my boys," says Absalon, "Forward!" At the same time a sudden glare of yellow light was accompanied by a cheer from behind the house, the back of which was chiefly built of wood, that was old and caught like tinder. They had set a light to some thatch, which flared up and speedily fired the rafters. "Woe on us!" cried I, "what are we doing? Master Francis! Master Francis!" and I shouted aloud, "bring forth the arms, I implore of ye, and let's begone without farther mischief!" But he heard me not.

Meanwhile an entrance had been forced behind, and we could hear tumultuous voices within. Others followed the lead, and the front door was presently flung open to admit the rest of us. I hurried in along with them to prevent harm rather than increase it. "Remember, lads, remember!" cried I, "we come for arms, nothing more!' But they heard me not, heeded me not, and there ensued a downright sack and pillage. Some ransacked chests and coffers, some pulled down pictures and hangings, some came forth loaded with plate. Others made for the cellar et the wine a running. And over and amid all, the

flames were gaining on us, and lighting up everything with a frightful glare. As I ran along a gallery, crying "Forbear, lads, forbear!" I saw Master Francis hurrying along with his sister in his arms; and heard her say, "Dear Frank, carry me into the stone turret, the fire can't reach us there."—"Let me help you, master," cried I, seeing him stagger under his light burthen. "Don't touch her, rascal!" cried he passionately, and bearing her off. I commenced tearing down some old hangings, which were the only combustibles in the stone gallery leading to the turret, and extinguished those that were just catching with my hands; for I thought the brother and sister should not be smothered like wasps if I could help it. He, giving the young gentlewoman a despairing kiss, put her in the arms of her woman and rushed back. "Ah, Jack, that's a queer employment for you," said he bitterly as he ran past me, "better go and help the sack." Then suddenly turning about and putting both his hands on my shoulders, and looking me full in the eyes, "What art doing? What art thinking of?" says he, "is this a man's revenge for a blow struck in passion? You are too good for your companions," and so off.

Meantime, our knaves had made the house too hot to hold them; and having got carts and waggons from the yard, were filling them, disorderly, not only with arms, but with wine, plate, and anything they could lay hold of,

laughing and cursing, wrangling, jesting, and drinking, till the scene had something infernal in it. Behind the stables I discovered some of the Squire's retinue stealthily preparing a horse litter, doubtless to convey the young wounded lady to her friends at the Castle; and before we made off, I perceived the litter stealing off through the shade, well guarded with horsemen; among whom, doubtless, were the Squire and Master Francis. At length we began our disorderly march. It is past telling the whooping, hooting, and hallooing that proclaimed our triumphant retreat, and return to head-quarters. I believe mine was the only heavy heart. Robin Ket was still beneath his tree, surrounded by his staff. Hearty congratulations and commendations welcomed our return; in special as the spoils were unloaded from the waggons and displayed on the grass. Ket's eyes seemed absolutely to gloat on the plate, the garments, and the wine.

"Master Ket!" said I, stepping forward as he was helping himself to a brimmer, "I've a complaint to make." —"Out with it, lad," returns he in high good humour. "This oak is my justice-hall, beneath its shade every man shall be righted. What's the grievance?"—"My grievance is," said I, "that our party did not obey orders. You bade us demand arms, but spake no word of fire and
e."—"Out upon thee, simpleton," cries he laughing,
were they to get the arms without it? 'Twas but

spoiling the Philistines. Have we not taken up arms against the rich? They are fair game from this hour; as much so as wolves and foxes. Whatever is brought in of their spoils shall be welcome, and fairly divided among all, or kept in safe-guard till we have leisure for that purpose. To which end I have already had a tent set up and sentinelled for its protection." I was going to reply, when loud cheers announced the return of another marauding party, and he had no leisure to attend to me. I saw that there was not a soul on the ground would have a fellow-feeling for me just then, so slipped away for home.

I stepped a little out of my way to look down from the hill on our old habitation afar off. I could make out that it was disroofed, and saw a smoke rising from a blackened heap before the door. "Ah," thought I, why should I pity him so? He's burned my house, and we've burned his house, one's no worse than the other. Both had better have left it alone." And so turned off. Lumbering through the wood, I hear a cart approaching, and turning about see jolly farmer Hathaway driving up. Day was just breaking. "Jack! Jack! is that you?" cries he calling after me, "tarry, my man; I'm coming on as fast I can." So I halted. "Gramercy, Jack," says he, wiping his pleasant face, "we couldn't think what had come o' thee. There was Gillian looking

forth of the door every half-hour, and smartening up her hair after milking, and hanging about the gate at dusk; and 'Whatever's come o' Jack?' says mother, over and over again, till I said I was tired of hearing her, and would go and see. But Gillian said that was all nonsense, and would only make thee conceited, so then I stayed; and then she began to fidget, and at length to whimper, so then I said I'd go; but, lor-a-mercy, Jack, when I got to the old place, 'twas all dismantled, and nobody keeping house amid the ruins but a nasty jabbering Jack-a-monkey. So, while turning this in my mind, and pondering what could ha' become o' mine old gossip the reeve, up comes a stranger, and I asked him where your father's gone, and he tells me Squire Heriot has turned him out of house and home, and pulled the very roof off his head while he was asleep, and seized every morsel of chattels to pay his rent, and kindled the refuse. So then my blood boiled like anything, and I asked him where you were all gone; and he said, up to the wood-cutter's hut for the present; so then I go home and tells wife and daughter, and they cry like anything, and make me load this cart with everything good and convenient they can lay hands on for your present needs, and bid me drive off with it the quickest I can, and not to forget to give their commiseration and kind love, especially to Audrey; and Gillian would ha' liked to

come alongst wi' me, only somehow she turned ashamed. 'Cause, she said you and she had a bit of a lover's quarrel." Now, lads, what do you think, I like a true born fool as I was, did upon that? Why, I sat down upon the bank, and cried myself blind. And the farmer, he gets out of the cart, and thumps me on the back, as if I'd a fishbone in my throat, and keeps saying, "Come now, Jack, come now, give over this, or I shall begin to cry too. What a joke that would be! A pretty story! Come now, Jack, give over, I say." So at last he gets me into the cart alongside of him, and drives on towards the hut. And "Oh, Farmer Hathaway," say I, "dost know the Squire's house was burned down last night?"—"In sooth no," says he, "I was a-bed by eight o' the clock, and we are too far off to hear the flames crackle. Faiks, mother will be sorry to hear on't, for she loves Master Francis, I oft tell her, as though he were her own boy. Thou knows he's to be married afore Christmas."—"Who to?" said I, with a sudden prick at the heart. "Ah, that's telling," says he with a sly look. "Gillian?" cried I, looking imploringly at him. "Gillian?" repeats he in a maze, and then making the woods ring with his laugh. "That would be a joke! Gillian to marry a squire! Why, Jack, she's waiting for you!" I grasped his rough hand, and pressed my forehead to it. "Oh Farmer!" said I. "Well, what now?" says he

kindly. "Perhaps you'll say, Speak when you're spoken to, mistress Gill! wait till you're asked."—"No, indeed I shall not."—"Why, lad, a blind man might ha' seen it out o' the corner of his eye. Why, you've always had a kindness for each other. So why should mother and I say nay? We've always had a liking for you; and we know your worthy father has a snug bit o' money. Leastways, we've always thought so till this affair of the rent; and now it proves otherwise, it shan't make a bit o' difference."

I rode on in silence, lapped in a most pleasant dream; for I could hardly believe myself waking. It was such a change after the turmoil and misery and sin of the last few days, that I shunned thinking of the past, lest it should disturb my mental feast. I think I prayed, at least thanked God for this good thing within my heart, in some poor untutored fashion, and then fell a musing on Gill, and fancying the quick blush on her dear cheek the next time we met.

In another moment, for it scarce seemed longer, we came in sight of the hut, with Audrey bringing her milk-pail out of the cow-house. "A ramshackle roost as ever I see," quod the kind farmer with pity, "but there's y that makes sunshine on the dullest day, and in t place. Faith, what a pretty girl she do be! y poppet!" calling after her. "Dear Farmer,

is it you?" cries she joyfully, "how *did* you find us out?"—Well, 'twasn't very easy," returned he, "but I *have*, thou sees."—"Ah," sayth she, "Jack would tell you, of course."—"I've seen nought of Jack till five or ten minutes agone," returns he, getting out of the cart, "so guess again, my pretty. Now then for a kiss; that's right! See what a mort of things the women made me bring, which after all you may not want. Cheese and bread, and candles, and soap, and treacle, and apples, and —here's a cake, Jack, for *thee*. I think Gillian said she made it for thee three days agone, for a birthday present."

Oh me! did ever man feel so moved at sight of plumcake?

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FARMER'S VISIT.

Think not "No man seeth;"
Think not "No man heareth."

THE farmer now entered our mean dwelling, where, encountering my father, the latter began to shed tears. "Keep a heart, keep a heart, man," says the farmer, shaking his hand over and over again, and then sitting down beside him before the fire. "When times get worst, they're sure to mend: and Jack and I have been settling as we came along, how to make all straight. Sure, old friend, thou can'st ne'er be deemed a poor man, wi' two such children to thy share. Look at 'em both as they stand there, side by side; isn't Jack as likely a young fellow as eyes e'er saw? And as for Audrey— Thou's like thy mother, girl; enough said! I only wish I'd a son for thee, just such another as Jack."—"Oh, I should not like him at all, Farmer," says dear, saucy Audrey; "Jack is all very well for a brother; but I should like, for a lover, somebody of whom I was a little more afraid, some one with a little more wisdom, and book-lore, and mystery about him."——"Hear to her!" says Farmer Hathaway, laughing

"Well, gossip; what Jack and I were setting our wise heads together about as I came along was this. Gill loves Jack, and Jack loves Gill; and mother and I love both, and want to see 'em happy; and as this has long been our mind, when things seemed more equal between us, we're not going from it now, which would be unneighbourly and mercenary; but, on the contrary, as we are well to do, and you, it seems, are not, it has struck mother and me that it might easy your mind to hear that we are willing for the match, if you are."—"For every sixpence," cries father, all in a tremble, and striking the farmer's knee once and again with his fore-finger, "For every sixpence you give her, I'll give him a shilling. For every fifty you give her, I'll give him an hundred."—"You astonish me!" cries the farmer, looking very much interested and pleased. "I had no notion at any time, you could do more than meet me half-way; and at this present time, I did not suppose you could do that. But, I say, neighbour; thou must not forget pretty Audrey."—"She will fare very well," says father, drawing himself up, "on what's left."—"Good so," quod the farmer, "then enough's said. Only, I can't for the life o' me, make out why, since you're so well to do, you should ever have left the Lee. Howbeit, I suppose your money's somehow tied up."—"It is," said my father mysteriously, "tied up, but quite safe." And I was ready to burst with laughing,

when I bethought me that it was *tied up in my red handkerchief.*

At this moment, so interesting to us all, the two old men, grasping each other's hands, and Audrey, with her hands clasped on my shoulder, and my arm round her waist, "*Benedicite!*" said some one at the door; and, raising the latch, a shaven priest stepped in. "Peace to all in this house!" says he, extending his fingers in benediction; and, at a glance, I knew him for the hedge-priest, Father Conyers.—"Then I fancy one of us two will best be out of it," muttered Farmer Hathaway, who was a stout Reformer, and loathed all Papist fraternities, black, white, and grey. My father, who was somewhat of a formalist, and half disbelieved the creed of his old patrons, but always paid them honour, arose from his seat, and offered it to Father Conyers, who took it without any ceremony. "Jack," said he, however, to me, in an undertone, before seating himself, "the Tanner hath a pressing and responsible charge to commit to thee, and requireth thine instant presence,"—"Indeed," said I, in reply, without an intention of stirring; neither would I call him "Father." In fact, the smiling prospect now opening
, made me quite loathe the thought of Robin Ket.
'he wretched are disaffected. "Peace be on you
," resumed the priest, sitting down, by way of
conversation. I saw the farmer look at my

father, as much as to express his wonder he did not ask the intruder his business; but, being ignorant whether the visit were either welcome or expected, and seeing no signs, except on my face, of its being the reverse, he broke off his own talk with my father, and began chatting with Audrey.

This going on for some little time, and the priest still exchanging civil nothings with my father, who seemed quite unable to get rid of him, Farmer Hathaway at length said he must go, and, shaking hands cordially with all three, bobbed his head very slightly at the priest, eyed him well, and went forth. "We shall soon see thee down at the Moat-house, now, I suppose," said he cheerfully, as he mounted his cart. "The sooner the more to my wish," said I, "Farmer!" detaining him for a moment. "I would fain bear you company thither now; but that I want to see what this priest's business is with my father. I don't like him."—"Nor I neither, I can tell thee, lad," returns the farmer with a grimace, and lowering his voice. "He hasn't got that red nose for nothing." "There are *many* things," pursued I, earnestly, "that I want to tell you of; I will come down to you the first minute that I can. Meantime, give my dearest love to Gillian. And, God bless you, Farmer! You're the best man ever lived! Keep close, just now, among yourselves. The times are unsettling."

He looked at me wonderingly and anxiously. "They do say, I know," quod he, "that there's going to be a rising; and that Ket is going about with a lot of worthless fellows at his heels. But, goodness me, Jack! my men are well paid, well fed, and kindly treated; how can *they* better themselves, I'd like to know? I'm not afeard of them."—"Keep them about you, however," said I, "as much as you can; and be kinder to them, if possible, than ever. Above all, avoid *taking*, as much as *giving* offence; a hot word may be a spark to gunpowder! Oh, Farmer! how much harm has been done that way, already!" He looked astounded. "Lock up all fast at night," said I. "The rioters burned the Squire's house last night, and shot his daughter. God bless you. I must go look after this pestilent fellow."—"And beware thyself, Jack," quod he, with kind earnestness, "to be drawn into no mischief. They'd be fain enough to have a respectable lad, like thee, among 'em, I warrant. Ket, they tell me, has plenty of the rabble, but is sore striving to nab some respectable fellows." And, with a grave face, he drove off. How I wished those kind words had been sooner spoken!

Pulling up his horse, when he got a little way off, he looked back, and called out, "I shall drive slowly, if so be thou may'st follow after me."

I waved my hand to him, and went in. The priest was already in close converse with my father, and drinking

warm ale. Their heads were close together, and they were speaking low. Audrey, a little way off, was setting breakfast; and as my father preferred taking his at the fire, she and I sat down by ourselves, and I pricked up my ears to hear all I could, which was expedient, though not polite.

"Having thus shown thee," murmured the hedge-priest (I *won't* call him a priest, I vow!), "what good will result to our Holy Mother from this movement, and how the kings of the earth and rulers in high places shall take counsel against her in vain, if we hold but close, hold all together, and hold fast, it remaineth but to tell thee that nothing is lacking at present to our certitude of success, save the sinews of war."—"The what?" says my father, as though a little deaf. "The sinews of war," repeated the hedge-friar. "*Money*, father, he means," cried I, loudly. The priest gave me a hasty look.

"Oh—aye, money?" says my father, speaking slow. "Yes, I dare say you are right enow. He won't be able to get on long without money. Nobody can. It's the sinews of war and peace too."—"And witting your good affection," pursues Father Conyers, "and your ability to aid him in this glorious and pious cause, he desireth of you the special favour of a loan—a loan, to be repaid with very high interest."—"A loan!" cries my father, falling back in his chair. "Gramercy! Where is the principal to come from!"—"That, my son, thou best knowest,"

replies the other; "but we all know thou hast it."—"I!" cries my father, "what, when my landlord has just ejected me for not paying my rent? A likely story!"—"Oh fie, fie, my son," says Father Conyers. "Treasure thou hast. May be it is hidden; perhaps buried." "I call every saint to witness—" cries my father; and I stood aghast at his being thus, for love of lucre, on the brink of perjuring himself; when the priest interrupted him by silently withdrawing a coin from his pouch, and holding it up close to my father's eyes between his finger and thumb. "Whence hadst thou that?" cries my father, turning as white as ashes, when he beheld the device and superscription. "I picked it up out of the grass," returned Father Conyers, coolly pocketing it, "the night you all flitted from the Lee. I was coming through the trees on my way to visit a sick person, when I saw you all moving up the slope; your son pushing a truck, your daughter holding you by the arm. Presently you came to a stop: the youth ran back, and got you up on his shoulders (a kindly, a pious youth! I've a great respect for him)."—"All the love's on one side then, master," thought I. "But, presently he set you down," continues the hedge-priest, "and I see you commence shaking your garments, and eagerly tying up a heap of metal in a red pocket-handkerchief. After you were out of sight, I descended by the path you had gone up, musing much in my mind of what might be, on

a rough calculation, the amount of gold you had thus accumulated, which, I thought, might peradventure be eight or nine hundred pounds."—"A gross miscalculation!" cried my father. "And while thus calculating," pursued the other, without heeding the interruption, "the moonlight glittered on this coin in my path."—"Which you may as well restore to its rightful owner," says my father, holding out his hand.—"How do I know that you *are* the rightful owner?" says the hedge-priest. "How do I know whether you collected gold or half-pence in the red handkerchief? Or that this piece, which is of very old date, ever was yours? 'Tis of the mintage of Henry the Seventh."—"They all are," cries my father, hastily, "give it me; it's mine."—"Well, but why hast thou kept it so long?" pursues the priest, "and how didst thou come by it?"—"Wait till I'm in the confessional to learn that," says my father very impatiently, "I am not going to tell you now."—"I fear, my son," says Father Conyers, in a very sanctimonious voice, "'tis a very long while indeed since thou wast in any confessional at all; which, considering that thou professest to be a son of the true Church, is a great and grievous sin that requireth repentance and amendment. Also, as thou art known of all men to have been reeve to the late Abbot of the late Abbey of the (I will not say) late St. Radegund, it appeareth unto me that this vast treasure must have been accumu-

lated by you in the Church, by the Church, from the Church, and, what if I say, to the prejudice of the Church?"

"You will say what is an abominable falsehood," said my father, losing all respect for his shaven crown, and shaking his fist at him. "'Twas all honestly earned or generously given; and I defy you to prove it otherwise, or to wring anything from me to the contrary, whether in or out of the confessional; so prithee let me hear no more o't, nor concern thyself about another man's private affairs." —"Well, I may have urged this too warmly," says Father Conyers, with great composedness. "All I intended was to show you what I have shown, that I knew you had money, which you at first (like a prudent man, an' you had not been speaking to a priest) denied. This was my first object, which I gained; and my second, which I hope I shall gain, is that you will lend the Tanner a little of it."—"That will I never," says father, doggedly. "Indeed, I cannot; for 'tis not just now in the house. You cannot suppose I would keep such a sum in a defenceless tenement like this?"—"Why, 'twould be very improvident," says Father Conyers, "and much less safe than in our hands, secure as you would be of interest, very heavy interest. For you see, we are sure of supplies eventually, albeit just now we are rather short; and money is a thing which, passed from hand to hand,

groweth, e'en like a herb which is *set i' the earth.*"—"Ah, well," says father, "perhaps that's the way my money is now growing. I may be receiving as good interest from it, for aught you know, as any that Master Ket could offer me. So we'll conclude this conference, an' your reverence pleases, for I'm needed a-field."—"Content, content," says the hedge priest, "enough said. We part as good friends as we met. I never knew a moneyed man, asked for gold, who did not grow a little crusty. Money and morosity always go together; that's the reason I'm never morose, for I never have any money. I only plead for it now for the sake of the good cause; and am not at all sure you won't let us have it yet. *Pax vobiscum.*" And, with a beaming smile, which my father only responded to with a scowl, he rose and departed, beckoning me to follow. I only went as far as the threshold.

"Hist!" whispers he, "Ket wants you."—"But I don't want him," said I, bluntly. "Nonsense," says he, "you are vexed, just now, about this loan. It's not about that he needeth you. And you've sworn to do his bidding."—"I haven't," said I. "He held me fast by the hand, but I didn't say one word after him."—"That's tergiversation, and dolus malus," says the priest, "see 'Tully's Offices.' I will just hint to you that the matter in hand has to do with Farmer Hathaway."—"How so?"

cried I, starting. "Come and hear," said the priest. "If not, leave it alone; for I'm not minded to tell thee. Thou mightest save mischief." And moved off. "Stay!" cried I, calling after him, "maybe, I'll come in an half-hour, when I've thought on't a bit."—"When you will, or not at all: all's equal to me," replied he coolly, without looking back.

CHAPTER IX.

THE REBELS' CAMP.

WHEN I returned in-doors for my cap, I found my father fidgetting with a spade, now taking it up, now laying it down again, and looking very uncomfortable. "Lad," says he, "I'm uneasy about my money,—that pestilent priest will ferret it out, I'm thinking; maybe he's been listening at the keyhole, or peeping behind the hedge."—"Sure, father," said I, rather mischievously, "you would not attribute such shabbiness as that to a sworn servant of the Church?"—"They're fond enow of money, all of them," returned he, peevishly, "albeit they carry none in their purses. I've known more of them than you have, and lived behind the grate. Mark'dst thou not what he said about *lying i' the earth?*"—"Oh," said I, "that was a figure or trope, 'twas your conscience made it come home. Be not over anxious, father, lest thou betray thine own hiding. Dig not up the treasure in broad daylight, at any rate."—"I will not, I will not," saith he, setting down the spade and

sighing, "I'll only sit where I can watch the spot. I can mend that broken harness at the same time. Saints ha' mercy! What a plague and uneasiness money do be, first and last! First, to hoard, and next, to guard."

Leaving him at his post, I hurried off on the farmer's track in hope to come up with him, but was too late. When I got to the brow of the hill that commanded the Lee, I could overlook the road he must have gone, for a considerable distance, but he was out of sight. Then I looked down on our old home, and saw a wreath of thin white smoke arising, not from the rubbish heap, but from the ivy-grown chimney. This was queer; and I thought I would look into it, so struck down the hill as smart as I could. When I drew nigh the broken gate, I could not help thinking how often my dear mother had stood at it, shading her eyes with her hand from the evening sun, as she looked out for my father returning from the close; nor yet, when I saw the shattered porch, could I help remembering how she had sate within it at her spinning, while I conned my criss-cross row at her knee, out of an old horn-book that had been my father's before me. The door was off its hinges and fallen in, but a heap of planks, rafters, and broken chattels just withinside, made entrance almost as difficult as if the door were sparred close. I put my leg over them as if across a stile, and

bringing the other after it, found them within an inch of a bear's nose. Yes, there was Bruin, attached with a pretty long chain to the hook that used to bear our great skillet, who welcomed me into the home of my forefathers with a savage growl; and at the same moment that jabbering jackanape, his fellow, leaped down off the mantel-shelf, and alighting on my shoulder, commenced clapper-clawing my hair and eyes with his long nails and skinny fingers! I flung the disgusting beast into a bin, and shut the lid down upon him; and shaking my fist at Bruin, without getting within the length of his tether, I stepped into the back kitchen, pretty well guessing who I should find established there as self-constituted master of the house. There however I reckoned without my host; his breakfast was there, but not the man. A three-legged table of Audrey's, with a fragment of white diaper spread upon it, stood before a brisk wood-fire on the hearth, upon which, on a tripod, boiled an iron pot, with a tile for its lid, which prevented not a most savoury odour of mushrooms and strong pot-herbs from issuing forth. It was plain my master had set on a savoury stew, and would presently come in to enjoy it; I longed to burst out upon him from behind the door, and give him a good belabouring; but, after waiting a while, and seeing nothing of him, I smothered my indignation, and resolved to bestow no trouble on him, taking some credit

to myself for not putting a shovel-full of garden-mould into his stew.

Against the white-washed wall, I noted, as I went out, some rude scrawls, which I should never have known for my father and myself, if Master Ket had not spoken about them; and it struck me that this beast of a bear-warden was just as likely a man to have drawn them as any else. I took up a charred stick from the hearth, and scored a cross over the design, annexing to it this legend:—

> "Bear-ward was a tramper, bear-ward was a thief,
> Bear-ward came to my house and took a piece of beef;
> I went to bear-ward, he was not at home,
> He shall have a threshing next time that I come."

This relieved me a good deal; as I passed Bruin I trod on his toes, without intending it, but did not beg his pardon. When I got a little way off and looked back, all my bitterness returned, and I thought of some scriptural saying I had heard in church, about the dragon and the satyr dwelling in our pleasant places.

The fancy, however, that Ket was meditating some mischief to Farmer Hathaway, which I might perchance prevent, quickened my pace, and brought me in the course of an hour or so to the camp, if camp it might be called; but sure, never was such a confused, disorganised scene. Hundreds and thousands of strange-looking

fellows, without the least discipline or arrangement, walking, lying, or sitting, ill-clothed, and unshaven; stacks of arms, heaps of grain and fodder, piles of furniture and household utensils, pens of sheep and pigs, carcases hanging from the trees, fires kindled, food preparing, liquor running, recruits firing at a mark, or trying to march, horses tied together by the heads, or clogged, as at country fairs, ill-favoured women, and pretty ones too, hawking cakes, singing ballads, and telling fortunes,—anything to wile away time,—such was Ket's camp! Now and then a wild-looking lout, lumbering along on a big cart-horse, would ride up and ask where was the captain, or speed away as well as he could, on some special service. Waggons, tumbrils, trucks, were drawn up under the trees; booths set up, tents and rick coverings pitched: in one place you found drinking and swearing, in another, a congregation listening to a sermon from a hedge-priest. It seemed as if tag-rag and bobtail were keeping open court. I passed through half-a-mile of this rabblement, before I reached the Oak of Reformation, where the Tanner sat administering justice, as he called it. Queer judgments he seemed to be delivering. Two men, whose quarrel he could not adjust to his mind, were set, at last, to fight it out, and a ring was formed, and the man most in the wrong gave the other a black eye. It kept up the

good old English spirit, Ket said: and to this end he likewise encouraged bull-baiting, bear-baiting, cock-fighting, and pigeon-shooting, so that you never saw such a heap of riff-raff as were on the ground. Of course, my old acquaintance, the bear-warden, would be in high favour in such a court; and I thought, "Oh me, is this the way the land is to be ruled when King Edward is put down? Much good may it do us."

Just then the Tanner caught my eye, and beckoned me up to him. "Jack," says he, in somewhat of a threatening tone, "thy father seems cross about this loan, but 'tis no use for him to pretend he has not the money, for there's no deceiving me. I've an old witch-wife here," and he pointed out old Mother Mumblegrace, "who kens exactly where money is hid, and how much there is."—"Very likely," said I, "but whether my father hath any or no is quite away from the purpose, for suppose he is rolling in money, he is not obliged to lend it unless he be so minded; and in respect to anybody coming to take off our ground but the value of an old hen, whether by fraud or force, I can only say that I always keep an arquebuss loaded, and will kill him as dead as mutton."—"Who was talking of fraud or force?" says the Tanner, lowering his key, "I was only telling you I knew he could oblige me if he were so minded, and the day may presently come when he may regret not having

served friends with his mammon of unrighteousness."—"No unrighteousness at all," said I, "for a man to keep his own."—"Pshaw," says he, "don't you know I was quoting a text? Oblige your gossip Tom Hazeldean by taking his firelock and watching that baggage for an hour. He's dead weary before his time's up." So I took Tom's firelock, saying to him in a low voice, "Hallo, Tom, you here?" Which made him look ashamed. "Why, so are you!" said he suddenly, as the repartee occurred to him; and then went off.

I was the readier to guard these goods, because I saw they were those we had brought overnight from Squire Heriot's, and I thought they should not come to any more harm if I could help it. There they lay, pell-mell, partly under an old dirty rick-cloth, that did not half cover them, exposed to dirt, damp, and sly theft, without being the least good or comfort to those who had done their souls so much harm by pilling them. Half out of the heap lay a lute, richly varnished, and well strung, with a blue and silver riband to it that had doubtless been worn round Mistress Gertrude's neck. "How sorry and incensed Master Francis would be," thought I, "an' he saw his sister's lute lying this way," and just then, a stroller passing by stumbled over it, and then, laughing, picked it up, jangled the strings, and flung it down again. "That would ha' vexed him," thought I,

"as much as it vexed me to see the bear-warden's breakfast spread on Audrey's work-table," and just then Ket calls to me and says, "Jack, here's a party going off to Farmer Hathaway's with a requisition for so many bushels of oats, so many of winnowed wheat, and so many more of white peas. Can you give us any idea how many he can supply?"

"I don't believe he can supply any," cried I, "at least I'm sure he will not. It's no use going there."—"*Will not* is wasted breath," says the Tanner, grimly, "We shall ask and have. Will you take the command of the party?"—"Why, how *can* you expect it, Master Tanner," said I, "when he's my father's closest friend?"—"Return to your post, then," said he, shortly, and I resumed my office mechanically, turning in my mind, with great uneasiness, what would come of this expedition, and whether the farmer would resist, and with what effect.

I wished I was at the Moat-house to stand by him; it would have been better to have followed him thither, than to have come here on a fool's errand, led by the nose by a cunning priest. While ruminating how I might get the start of the party, and at least warn him of its approach, several other detachments were sent off on like errands; and I presently observed that all the farmers who had refused voluntary aid to the insurgents,

were classed by Ket with the gentry and outlawed, and declared fair game accordingly. Tom Hazeldean now lounging up, I said to him, "I don't like this business at all; they'll harry my old friend, I'm thinking. I wish I were there to prevent mischief."—"You must look sharp if you do that," says Hazeldean. "Take you the firelock, then," says I, casting it down, and scampering off in the direction of the Moat-house; but before I had gone twenty paces, I found myself pinned in a man's arms.

"Here's a sentry forsaking his post," cries he, "what's to be done with him, Captain?"—"Tie him to the nearest tree, hand and foot, for a couple of hours," says Ket. "Sorry for you, Jack my man, but this trick has occurred too often within the last twenty-four hours; and I must teach the knaves discipline by making an example, even at your expense. 'Tis not over severe a punishment for the offence neither."

I don't know that it might have been adjudged so indeed, in a regular court-martial; but nothing was regular here, and I did not own the laws of the place, nor the authority of the man, so I hit right and left, and gave one or two precious black eyes; notwithstanding which, I was captured speedily, and bound hand and foot to a tree right over against the Oak of Reformation; with all the idle, malicious fellows grinning at me.

CHAPTER X.

A MAN TIED TO A TREE.

A MAN can hardly feel more powerless than when bound, hand and foot, to a tree. I could not so much as keep off the flies from stinging my nose. I scorned to show how mad I felt, since they would only have laughed at me; so I set myself a counting ten thousand, and then a reckoning all the sheep of our flock by their faces, and then saying all the hymns I knew, and all the ballads; but I got tired of this at last, especially as I saw how the shadows lengthened; and I said, "Come, lads, my time's up, I know; so untie me."

But they only jeered and gaped, and said the time seemed longer to me than it was: how could I tell without a dial? I said, "How can *you*, an' it comes to that; the shadow of the tree is my dial; whereas it fell on my left hand, it now falls on my right." They said, "Your hands are so close together that your saying does not amount to much," and laughed again; and others ·nd said, "What has he done? summut desp'ut

bad, seems loike," and surveyed me narrowly. Then I shut my eyes, and resolved to think of something pleasant; but how hard it was! At length, I fell thinking of Gillian, and my first sight of her, and her first word to me, and everything that had passed between us since; and this interested me so, that presently when one said, "Thy time will soon be up," I made answer, "I don't care whether or no."—"Art not weary," asked he, surprised. "Yes," said I, "I'm ready to drop, when I think on't, but I was thinking of something quite different."

Just then, we heard a hullabaloo approaching; and Tom Hazeldean, who kept hanging off and on about me, said to me under his breath, "They've captivated Farmer Hathaway and his daughter, and are bringing them in." —"Gillian?" cried I, in a voice of thunder, "what's that for? Oh Tom! an' thou lovest me, untie my hands!" —"I dare not," whispered he, "they're such Turks, they would flay me alive." And moved off, lest I should ask him again. If I ever was pretty near beside myself, 'twas that moment.

The crowd opened, and I saw the marauding party returning, driving some of the farmer's stock before them, and bringing ever so much of his fodder in his own waggons; and alongside of them, guarded, but not handcuffed, the farmer himself, looking black as night, and

Gillian, her pretty face all befouled with weeping. They drew quite nigh without seeing me; and one of our lieutenants, going up to Gillian, with mock civility, said "Give ye good den, mistress," and was going to salute her, when she gave him such a box on the ear that for the life o' me I could not help bursting out a laughing; and the next minute fell a crying.

The moment she heard me laugh, she looked about; and spying me out, cries, "Oh Jack!" and, flying up to me, the next moment has her arms round my neck. And though she did not kiss *me*, I had a very good opportunity to kiss *her*. (You know it, Gill; so say nothing to the contrary.) And, my tears crowding faster and faster, I whispered, "Do wipe mine eyes, dear Gill; and don't let those rascals see me crying;" and hid them on her shoulder.

"Oh, those wicked, wicked men!" says she, darting looks of fire around, "how durst they bind you this way?"

And I was going to answer her, when a fresh disturbance arose. A fellow on a cart-horse dashed wildly up to the Tanner, who was wrangling with Farmer Hathaway beneath the Oak; and cries, "The gentry are down upon us, with a troop of horse, headed by young Heriot. They'll be here in five minutes."

ntly, there was such a hubbub as never you heard

in your life. For you must remember, all these insurgents were without the least experience or discipline; but what they wanted in order, they were likely to make up for in brute force. Before Ket could any ways form them in array, a party of armed and mounted gentry, with Master Francis at their head, dashed gallantly into the midst. Instantly the rebels closed round them, with infuriated cries, hemmed them in, slew, wounded them, or took them prisoners. After as desperate an affray as ever I saw, I believe scarce one of them returned home that evening to tell his tale. Master Francis was cut down among the first, not killed, but disabled by the Tanner himself, who gave him a desperate wound in the sword arm.

But, before this took place, which, however, did not occupy many minutes, Gillian, still clinging to me, whispered, "Let me unbind you, now, from the tree." I returned, "No, leave me where I am for the present; for I don't want to take either side. I see the gentry must lose, and I won't strike in for the Tanner. But be off thyself, dear Gill, thou and thy father, with the speed of light, now they are not watching you; and make for home the fastest you can. Maybe I'll be with you before sundown, e'en now." She gave me a quick, impassioned look, and was off like a lapwing. I thanked God in my heart, and watched the end of the fray.

Ket, riding up triumphant, and in high good humour

at this first and flattering success, spies me in passing. "Ha, Jack!" says he, pulling up, "you've been o'erlooked in this medley. Your time is more than up, I know. Unbind him, Jeffrey; come under the Oak, lad, and have a cup of wine. I owe thee some compensation." —"I don't care for the wine, Master Ket," said I, following him to the tree, "but, since you allow I've a claim for some compensation, I'll tell you what I should like it to be."—"Speak out, then," says he, "and make haste, for I've many things to attend to."—"Yonder lies my rival," said I, "chilling in his blood: I know not if mortally hurt or no. However, let me have him for my captive, since you gave me not the opportunity of making him such myself, and let me have him in ward."—"He can't be in safer, I wot," said the Tanner, with a grim smile. "Have your will; and now make way for others."

So I went up to where Master Francis lay all along, his strong right arm stretched out powerless, in a bath of blood, with the sword that had fallen from his relaxed hold a little way beyond it. And I noted also, a few dark drops oozing through the bright curls of his chesnut hair, and dabbling his lace-collar, and stealing down his murray doublet. I stood at pause for a moment, thinking how I should move him; and seeing one of Farmer Hathaway's hand-trucks hard by, with a little hay in it, I made no more ado, but taking up my young gentleman in

my arms, lifted him into it as carefully as I could. He gave an awful groan or two when I first touched him, but I knew 'twas no good minding that; and having disposed him as well as I could on the hay, I next took off my handkerchief, and twisting it very hard, like a hayband, wound it round his arm above the wound, which stayed the bleeding. Then I dragged away at the truck, and fairly pulled him off the battle-field and out of the camp, and among the trees. Presently the pain of the journey made him open his eyes. "Where am I?" says he; "Jack, is that you? What are you doing with me?" And fainted off again. I thought that was the best time for pushing forward; and made considerable progress before he came to again. "Do stop awhile," was his next word, "this motion kills me."—"Cheer up, Master Francis," says I, "we shall presently be home, where you shall be well tended."—"*Home?* what home?" says he faintly, "*mine* is burnt to the ground."—"So is mine, or something like it," said I, "we've a fellow-feeling there. Mine was not so grand as yours, but it was all I had." He lay quiet so long upon this, that I thought he had swooned off again; but he was only thinking. "You're right," says he, with a great sigh, "I've taken too little thought of this. If I ever get well, and have tenantry of my own, I'll be tender to them, Jack."—"That you will, I know, master," said I cheerily, and pulling on the

truck. "Oh," moans he, "you are jolting me to death." —"Only one or two jolts more," said I, "and we shall be on smoother ground." Which I said, boys, just to hearten him up a little, for I can't say I knew it would be so. "You've given me a good many more than two or three jolts," says he piteously, at the end of another quarter of a mile. "I wonder," said I, stopping short, "whether I could carry you on my shoulders."—"Oh no," says he, "I'm too heavy."—"'Tisn't so much that," said I, "as that you're too long!"—"Just turn me out on that bank, an' thou lovest me," says he despairingly, "and let me die in peace."

So I dragged him up to the bank, close to a little runnel of clear water, and heaved over the truck, sideways like, so as to keep half of him still within it, for the greater convenience of going on with him again. And I sate myself down on the moss, and got his head upon my knees, with the water quite convenient at my right hand, and I got his kerchief out of his pouch, my own being engaged in his service already, and I dipped the kerchief in the runnel and bathed his face, and washed the wound, and drew it together, and stanched it with a bit of cobweb that hung hard by, and gave him some water to drink out of the hollow of my hand. This revived him a good deal, and his lips began to have a little colour in them. So, after a while, I say, "You're better now, shall we go

forward?"—"For goodness sake, don't name it," cries he, squeezing my hand, "I'm so comfortable!" So then we bide a bit longer; and all at once I remember a thumping piece of Gillian's cake, which Audrey had put in my pocket. 'Twas quite enough for the twain of us, so I ate half with great relish myself, and fed him with the other half, moistening it a little in the runnel. There was a robin singing in the hedge hard by. "What a funny position, Master Francis," quod I, all of a sudden, "for two enemies!"—"Jack," says he, with a smile stealing over his face, "thou'rt a capital fellow. I don't think a woman could have tended me better."—"Oh, now you humble me," said I. "When Audrey comes to nurse you, 'twill be another guess affair."—"Where are you taking me, then?" says he. "Where, but to the woodcutter's hut," said I, "where we've harboured since your father ejected us! 'Tis but a poor place, I own, not fit for the like of you."—"Nor for the like of you, neither," says he, a faint colour rising on his cheek: "I know the hovel well, I hunted a weasel there not long ago. 'Tis not a shelter fit for an old man like your father, nor yet for a pretty girl like Audrey."—"Well," said I, "I wish it better just now, in special, for your sake; if the Squire doesn't like your quarters, he must remember who deprived us of any better to offer you."—"Well," says he, "the evening shades are falling, I

suppose you had better push me forward. I wish you had a better job."—"Don't name it," said I; and with recruited strength I soon got him to our door. Audrey came forth, full of tender concern; and soon had a bed made up for him, and everything about him as comfortable as our poor case permitted. She pitied him amain, I could see; but that did not interfere with her binding up his wounds as unblenchingly as if she had been in a spital all her life. And then, such nice slops as she made him! and such care as she took to keep all quiet about him, and to keep the light out of his eyes! To amuse him, and yet not to excite him! To hearten him up, and yet not let him get too forward! Women have a natural gift, I think, for these matters. 'Twould be a pity an' they got no practice.

CHAPTER XI.

JACK AND HIS PRISONER.

My father seemed very ill-pleased at my bringing home Master Francis, and said he could not for the life of him think what I would be at. He grudged the room and attention the wounded man took from him; and sate by the fire, murmuring to himself, or went out of doors with a spade in his hand, as though hankering to put it to some use.

At length, we were shut in for the night; Audrey, in her little closet; father, in the lean-to; and I, over against Master Francis in the kitchen. I could not sleep for thinking of the events of the day, so made a vigilant nurse. All at once, about two hours after we were settled, I was ware of a noise, and the dog began to growl. Presently I heard father moving about, so guessed the first noise had been of his making, and that he was restless about his money and going to hover about it, which was no uncommon thing. So I lay quiet, for fear of disturbing Master Francis; but presently the dog gave

a fierce bark, so then I was sure mischief was afoot, and I was up and abroad directly. My father was scuffling in the dark with two men, who made off over the hedge as soon as they saw the light stream through the door I had opened. I got up with one of them, who was making away with the treasure still tied up in my red handkerchief, and I gave him a blow just where a weasel bites, you know, boys, just under the ear. So he fell to the ground and dropped the bundle, which I instantly snatched up; but at the same moment, the other aims a firelock at my father and shoots him dead as a stone. My terror and grief were such, that I let the villains escape, though without their booty, while I ran to raise up my father. I said, "Cheerly, father, bear up, they've gone, and got nothing." But he heard me not. So I heaved him up—Oh how heavy a dead man is!—heavy as grief! —and carried him within. Audrey, all scared at the firelock, was peering forth of her closet; but when she saw me staggering in with father, she gave a shriek and ran in. We got him down, sprinkled him, held our hands to his heart, but no, 'twas all over. Audrey took his head on her knees, and wept over him, like to break her heart. Master Francis, awake and full silent, lay viewing the scene. He said in after-time, he ne'er in his life saw aught so moving.

Well we bore him into his own little chamber, and laid

him out the best we could; and then I went off to the next town to bespeak a coffin. 'Twas a doleful thing for Audrey to be left in a hut with a dead man, and a man almost dying; but there was no help for't.

Hastening through the wood, I came across the old mole-catcher, Lamech a-Dene. "Hallo, Jack," says he, "what makes you out this time o' night, like a pole-cat stealing to a rabbit-warren?"—"My father has been murdered," said I, hastily, "and I'm going for a coffin." —"Nay then, I'll go along with thee," saith he, "and hear about it as we go. Who's the murderer, dost think?" —"Some of Ket's men, I fancy," said I, "and I'm not sure I don't know one of 'em; they've been harping on his money lately, and telling him they knew he had some."—"Much coin, much care," says Lamech, "it made the poor reeve miserable in his life, and hastened his death. As to the Tanner and his crew, how inconsistent is all their babblement about rights and justice when they don't even observe common honesty! I say not the gentry are not without fault, but these measureless rogues have done more wrong already in a week than their masters in a year."—"I'm sure on't," said I.—"They'll only make things worse for themselves," says Lamech. "Who will submit to such rabble rule? The respectable part of the community will rise against them; and though their numbers may give them a brief success,

as it did to-day, yet they won't long have the balance in their favour, even that way; for if four thousand troops can't put them down, the king will send eight thousand; and if eight thousand won't do, he'll send eight thousand more, and eight thousand upon that. Mark my words."—"Ah, Lamech," said I, "you're like enow to be in the right on't; and yet there are some men cleaving to Ket that I verily believe are as single-minded and well-meaning as you or I."—"Jack," quod he, "there may be many such—I'm not gainsaying that. But, Jack, the means they are taking to gain their ends are against the law of God and of man; and more than that, Jack, they are such as will defeat their own purpose. Now, hear me, and give over brushing away your tears; we can't bring the poor old reeve back again. If any one had reason, Jack, to use the sword against constituted authorities, it was our blessed Saviour; and yet what said he, when one of his disciples dealt a good stroke for him? 'Put up thy sword again into its place: they that take the sword shall perish by the sword.' You mind his saying so?"—"Oh, yes, Lamech," returned I. "Well, then," continues he, "what are laws made for, but to do us good? But an' if we break them we do harm; and we do break them by these combinations to get by force what we can't get by fair speaking. I hear tell that Ket has sent up a petition to the king to get certain things

done that like him, and certain things undone that like him not; but none but the most timid and imbecile government on earth would be dictated to by the likes of him, though with forty thousand at his back; and our government is not that. No, no, they'll put him off with false promises, or treat him with contempt, so you'll see." —"Hist!" said I, "I hear something coming."

We fell back into the shelter of the wood, and saw dimly through the trees a considerable body of horse moving stealthily along a by-road in the direction of Ket's camp.

"Those are gentry," whispered Lamech to me, as they passed, "bent, no question, on avenging the morning's loss. They ride more orderly, and are better mounted than the Tanner's men; I see their breast-plates glitter."

When they had ridden by, we pursued our course. "The rascals gat not your father's money-bag, then," quod he, "for all the sin they wrought."—"No," said I, "I thought not of it at the time, staggering under my poor father's body; but as I came forth, I stumbled over it, so carried it in-doors and cast it where they won't think to look for't an' they come back—in the meal tub. However, Lamech, I'm no ways minded to let it be a burthen to me night and day, as it was to my poor father, and as it will be to me if I keep it in that insecure harbourage. I shall always be fancying marauders

prowling about us in the night, or molesting poor Audrey when I'm away from home. We are rich enough now to pay for safe lodgings; and till these unquiet times are over, I am minded to shelter with my sister in some town."

Just at this moment we came out on the brow of a hill, which commanded a pretty wide stretch of flat country. The dark sky suddenly kindled into a lurid red, and the bright flames rose from a distant city in the direction of Norwich.

"There's your town," said Lamech, ironically. "Very safe you'd be there, my lad, with your pretty sister and pot of money. Mighty safe under mob law. Shall we go and see how it works?"—"No," said I, with a shudder, and turning in another direction, "I can guess pretty well; and I need to get me a coffin for my dead father, and to hie home as soon as I may to my disconsolate, unprotected sister."

So, without another word, we sped down the hill, to a village that lay at its base. 'Twas now late; but folk in towns and hamlets get not to bed so soon as them that live removed; we had gone to rest at sundown, and the robbers might have come upon us a couple of hours afterwards. There were lights yet in a few houses. I found the man who made coffins, and told him what I wanted. He listened greedily to my story of the murder, and told

me he had a shell ready to hand that would fit my father. So, as it was a light one, I took it up with a sad heart. Just then a man on horseback dashed up to the door.

"They're playing old gooseberry at Norwich," cries he. "Why, they've set it a-fire, haven't they?" says Lamech.

"No," says he, "that's a farm and some out-buildings, between this and that, but Norwich wasn't in flames when I left it, though it may be by this time—nothing more likely; for they're as drunk as drunk can be. The Tanner and his men surprised the town at nightfall, carried it quickly by assault, and are now lords of all; feasting in the mayor's house, he and his picked men; setting the wine running in the mayor's cellar, and making the mayor himself serve it out to them, and play their cup-bearer. The rest of the insurgents are paravaunting it i' the town, every house of which is lit up with candles, and bonfires of things they throw out of windows are blazing in the streets. You ne'er saw such a scene in your life—women crying, children screaming, men swearing, shouting, and fighting."

"Oh, my goodness!" cries the coffin-maker's wife from the stair-head, where she was hearing all she could; "they'll come here next, I suppose, Diccon; for mercy's sake, let's pack up what we can, and make off to the

woods."—"Peace, you foolish woman," says Diccon, "how shall we better ourselves by doing that?"—"Every way," says she. "Oh, don't let us wait to have the house burnt over our heads." And burst out a crying, whereon a couple of children in bed began to cry too; in the midst of which, I departed with my sad burthen; Lamech still persisting in bearing me company, that he might, he said, lend me a hand; though he knew as well as I, that the weight on my back was nothing to that on my heart.

Before we were quit of the village, it was all astir with women and men, looking forth of lattices, to ask what was the ill news. Some were at their doors, talking and listening. I remember a little boy began to hum a line of one of the songs that the Tanner's men were fond of singing—

> "Hey-ho, the barley-mow!
> Sheep are feeding, all of a row—"

whereon his mother gave him a cuff on the head, saying, "You naughty varlet, let me hear you sing that song again, if you dare! Sheep are feeding, quotha! We shall soon have neither sheep nor barley, an' Master Ket carries it at this rate; and then what will come of the country?"

"Thou sees, lad," says Lamech, as we went along, "that Diccon's wife's first impulse was to be off to the

hills, at the bare rumour of the approach of these rebels that call themselves *the people* and the people's *friends*. She felt there was no security in towns or villages, under mob-law, poor wretch; just as you feel there's none in the lone forest. Woe unto the land where the householder is no longer lord of his own fireside."

"Hark!" said I, as we entered the wood, "I thought I heard a woman scream."

We stopped a moment, and listened. "'Tis only some of those vagabonds," quod Lamech, "on their way back to their camp. I can hear the tune, though not the words, of their Latin gibberish, about *enemies noster*, the hedge priest has taught 'em."—"Stay," cried I, "hold you the coffin, and let me run forward," for I could hear a woman cry "Help!" and my heart misgave me that I knew the voice.

So I gave him the shell, and sprang forward, fighting my way through the brushwood, to the place from whence I could hear sobs and prayers, mingled with laughing, jibing, and

"Hey-ho, the barley-mow!"

CHAPTER XII.

A WISE-WOMAN IN JEOPARDY.

I BURST forth from the brake upon three men, one of whom was the bear-warden, haling along poor old Mother Mumblegrace, in spite of her tears and cries for mercy. My sudden appearance startled them, and she, catching sight of me, cries, "Jack! Jack o' the Lee! Save me! save me! these hearts of stone are going to duck me in the horse-pond."—"For a witless witch as thou art!" cries one of her captors, seizing her anew, "we'll see presently, whether thou dost sink or swim."—"And if I sink, I'm drowned," cries she, "and if I swim, you'll burn me! Oh, Jack, sweet Jack! save me. As sure as ever you had a dear mother, I'm no witch, they ken it; 'tis revenge, no less; just because I wouldn't tell where a pot of gold was buried, nor cure a man that was shrew struck, without a bough of shrew-ash to wave over him."—"*I* know where a pot of gold is buried!" said I, [illegible] my knuckles against the bear-ward's eye, "and [illegible] a word with the man that wanted to find it."—

"And here's a coffin to bury him!" cries Lamech in a hoarse voice, coming forth of the trees; seeing whom, with his ghostly burthen on his back, the three rogues set off as fast as they could pelt, leaving poor old Goody behind them. She makes no more ado, but straightway drops down on her knees to me, and falls a kissing my hand.

"Blessed, blessed Jack!" cries she. (Poor old soul, she *was* in a quandary.) "Oh you dear, good young man, how can I thank thee? The blessing of her that was ready to perish be upon thee!—and, in sooth, Jack, I ne'er meddled with aught unholy or forbidden in my life; but thou sees I was knowing in a thing or two above the cunning of the unler'ed, such as the burying of your butter, and I saw my advantage, and practised on 'em wi't, which was foolish, I own, and may be sinful. For we likes power, Jack, and 'twas a great matter to a poor, old, neglected body like me, to be able, not only to turn a few pence, but to make myself feared and respected. Howsoe'er, I'll ne'r do't again; I'll keep close, spin my wool, and pull rushes. But sure, Jack, if there's ever anything I can do for thee, in the way of nursing, or healing a hurt . . . and now, wherefore that coffin?"—

"My father's killed stone-dead, Goody," said I, deeply sighing, "by the mate of one of those ruffians that was haling you along; and because our hut is so small, we must bury him as soon as we can give notice to the parson

and clerk; and if thou'lt come and help watch him, 'twill be good Christian service, and there's Audrey to look to besides, and a wounded man to nurse."—"Praise God," cries she cheerfully, "that there's so soon an opportunity of requiting thee, not that I'm glad o' thy trouble, Jack, but that I can help thee in't. Sure, I don't value the life that's in this old body a pin's point, to lay it down, if need were, for any one I cared for; but 'twas fearsome to lose it through those wretches."

Well, lads, we got to the hut at last; and there sate poor Audrey, a yard or so off from Master Francis, not weeping, for she had spent all her tears, but woful and desolate, with her hand covering her heavy eyes. He on his part, lay stone still, but looking upon her with great compassionateness, and had, I think, been speaking some words of comfort to her, which had redounded to her and his good. For we can't feel and express pity for others without doing good to our own selves. As soon as she saw the coffin, she burst out a crying again; for though it could not make my poor father more dead than he was already, yet all the apparatus and paraphernalings of death have a great effect upon the spirits of women and timid persons who need such monitions least; and yet they would be sorriest of all to do without them. Well, Mother Mumblegrace was verily and indeed a friend in need; as I had been to her, so was she to me, helped me

to shroud him as neat as possible, and lay him in the shell, with a plate of salt on his breast, and a sprig of rosemary in his hand; a dead man could not have looked more comfortable; which has always been a consolation to me. And she sent Audrey to bed, and kept an eye to Master Francis, (who, however, did not relish her near as well for a nurse, but took things as they came, very patient, and had a lesson in that hut, I fancy, about how poor people live, and how they feel, and how they have to smother their feelings, and how they are kind to one another, that has lasted all his life). Poor Audrey, spent with grief, was heavy to slumber; I just peeped in on her, and saw her, like the poor overworn disciples, sleeping for sorrow. In the morning she arose, wondrous refreshed, washed her face, smoothed her hair, like the good patriarch Joseph, and came forth, with her grief locked up in her deep heart, to set about the common offices of life. And so we went on for a day or two, till the Sabbath whereon my father was buried; when a few old neighbours came to help carry him to the grave. And one of 'em told me that Ket had been carrying it proudly ever since the taking of Norwich, and had now a mighty concourse of the disaffected about him at the Reformation Oak, and that the King, in answer to his petition, had sent him word that he would call a parliament in October (which we were now close upon),

wherein the complaints of him and his fellows should be redressed; howbeit the Tanner, elated by his successes, and losing sight of the original cause of taking up arms, was by no means to be satisfied so easily, and refused to submit. Which shows you, lads, what a bad fellow he must have been at heart; for what good could he hope to attain by bloodshed that was not here fairly proffered to him without it?

On this, the King's Government, which was merciful, but not weak, though we had such a child to rule over us,—took measures to put down the rebellion with a strong hand; the sooner done, the more merciful in the end.

So the Marquis of Northampton, my Lord Sheffield, my Lord Wentworth, and divers other Lords and Knights advanced upon the insurgents with fifteen hundred horse, which was too small a detachment, even with the support of an auxiliary band of Italians. For the rebels defeated them, though with no small loss to themselves; and in this encounter I am not much afflicted to say that my old foe, the bear-ward, was knocked on the head. Having thus tasted blood, and success, and taken a good many prisoners, all that was bad in 'em was up, and much evil threatened to ensue. The brave Earl of Warwick was now sent against them with six thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse, accompanied by Lord Willoughby, Lord

Powis, and many other valiant noblemen and gentlemen of name and fame. When the Earl came near Ket's camp, he sent a herald to offer free pardon to the insurgents if they would but lay down their arms. Now, lads, what could be mercifuller than this? See how Ket and his mob had got power, and how they had abused it; and see how these noblemen knew they had power, and how they used it. But the rebels were so mad and so headstrong that they refused the offer of mercy; reckoning absurdly on their conquering this considerable force as they had the inferior one, and urged not to give in by Ket, who feared for his own life. So the two opposing parties drew up over against each other in battle array; and Ket placed in the front line of his army all the prisoners he had taken, that they might fall at the first fire.

This brings me back to ourselves. Master Francis had now the use of my father's chamber, such as it was (a mere lean-to built on by the woodcutter, but yet with a reasonable good bed in it,) and he was beginning to recover of his wounds, and to sit up and take his meals with us, and in short, be like one of ourselves, and great kindness and affection were manifesting themselves among us, shut up as we were together, with very little mind to go forth. And 'twas he had the freshest egg, and the fattest rasher, and the kissing-crust of the new loaf, and the warm corner; but beyond these little indulgences,

which we took pleasure in yielding, (for I declare we were every one of us as fond of petting and cockering him as ever Dame Hathaway had used to be; he had a spell about him, that youngster, I fancy, that won all hearts, save when he now and then gave himself an air or two, which he never did in our cottage),—but, as I was saying, beyond these little indulgences, which every one would accord to a sick man and a guest, 'twas all share and share alike,—no separate tabling,—no above and below salt, except for fun, when I one day set the salt-cellar between him and me. The stories he could tell, that young gallant!—the ballads he could recite!—the sentences he could bring out!—the questions he could put! Well, 'tis no wonder he was the women's darling; for book-lore and poesyings do carry their weight with us all.

I remember one day, Mother Mumblegrace had undertook to make us an apple-dumpling (she was very useful to us, that old woman,—would trudge miles for anything we wanted, and be content with whatever was given her; *she* had her long stories too. I never knew such a one for fairies and ghosts. They made the evenings pass mighty pleasant). Well, she was going for to make an apple-dumpling, when, popping her hand into the meal-tub, "Hey-day!" quod she, "here's a pudding already!" Well, I laughed till I cried. I laughed to think I had so g forgotten the lot o' money, and I cried to think of

poor, dear father, and the evil it had brought on him. However, I thought, now was a very good time for seeing how much there was, for we were all friends; so, "Give me that pudding, Goody," says I, taking from her the red handkerchief, which was a white one now, "and we'll see what we shall see." How Master Francis stared, when I poured the money out! I told him all about it, and gave Goody five pieces for bringing it to light, and then we counted up the rest, and Master Francis gave me his advice about it as a friend. Just as we had tied it up, we hear a hammering at the door. Goody gives me a knowing look, and pops the money into the meal again; then plump up to the elbows in suet and flour.

Then I opened the door, and there stood a couple of as ill-looking fellows as ever you saw. "What do you want?" said I. "Master Ket wants your prisoner," said they. "He desires you will give him up to us."

"That will I never," said I; "he's my lawful captive, the only good I've got of Master Ket yet, and he was given over to me of Master Ket's own free-will. My life for his life; I have him in safe ward, and so will keep him; you won't reach him unless over my dead body, and I've a sword and arquebuss here, behind the door."

They began to curse upon this, and to say they dared not return without him; but I shut and sparred the

door in their faces; and, after hammering at it awhile, they called out, "You'll hear from us again," threateningly; and went their ways.

But the next I did hear of them was, that Ket's army had laid down their arms on the personal remonstrance of the Earl of Warwick, who, at the hazard of his life, rode up, within speaking distance of their lines, and mildly remonstrated with them on their sedition, and offered them mercy if they would lay down their arms, and give up their ringleaders. So, the next minute, Master Ket found himself on horseback, strapped round the waist to one of the Earl's troopers, his hands tied to his sides, and his feet tied together under the horse; and in this guise, he was taken off to Norwich Castle, where he lodged that night, and was hanged the next morning. A few other impenitent ringleaders were hanged on the Reformation Oak, the rest quietly dispersed; most of them tired of their lawless courses, and glad to return to work; and the country once more rejoiced in safety and quiet. Farmer Hathaway presently arrived in his best waggon, to take me and Audrey away to the Moat-house. Gillian was with him. What I said and she said needs not here to be recited; but I noted she had made herself brave in her cherry-coloured ribbons, which she knew well enough became her; and which were not deeper dyed than her cheeks, when I helped her out of the waggon. Just before this, Master Francis had been fetched

away by his friends at the Castle, who, as soon as they learnt where he was (which I sent them word of, so soon as there was to be no more fighting), despatched servants, and horses, and a litter, to take him home, under the conduct of a page, named Gratian.

Thereon, as ye may wot, ensued much tender leave-taking; and Master Francis, warmly grasping my hand, said, "Jack, as soon as ever I have land of mine own, which will be ere Christmas, thou shalt have the best farm I possess at an easy rent, and there shall be no more quarrelling between master and tenant. To thee, Audrey, what can I say? I know not how to express enough gratitude to my kind nurse. Will you be own woman to Mistress Beatrix? You will find her a gentle mistress."

Poor Audrey coloured deeply, and then turned very pale. She faltered, "No, sir; I kindly thank you."

He looked perplexed for a while, and then said, "Will you be personal attendant to my sister Gertrude? Her own maid will leave her to be married, as soon as Gertrude recovers from the gun-shot wound; and I trow my sister will love you dearly, Audrey, for the kindness you have shown to me. Say 'yes.' Will you!"

Tears trembled on her long lashes as he took her by the hand; but she brightened up, and said, "Yes, sir, I will. That is, as soon as dear Jack is married. May you be happy—very happy, Master Francis!"

On which, he shook her hand heartily, spoke a few more kind words, and was assisted by Gratian and me into the litter, which we looked after, as long as it was in sight. And, just as we were turning in, Audrey smiled through her tears to see Farmer Hathaway's waggon lumbering towards us.

Yes, boys. *I* saw you nudge one another, when I named the name of Gratian. He was the happy man. Why do I say *the?* as if he were happier than Master Francis or than I? I've rubbed on, you know, with Gill, one way or another, ever since;—she leading me a tyrannous hard life of it. Gill, you *know* you have, you monkey!

THE END.

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A

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